

**COMPLETE WORKS OF
SWAMI ABHEDANANDA**

VOL. VIII



SWAMI ABHEDANANDA
(*in America*)

COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

VOLUME VIII

(BHAGAVAD GITA PART I)



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ABOUT THIS COMPLETE WORKS

EIGHTH VOLUME

(THE BHAGAVAD GITA, PART ONE)

We are now offering to the public the Eighth Volume of COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA, published on the occasion of the Swami Abhedananda Centenary Celebration, 1966-67. This volume contains the inspiring lectures on the BHAGAVAD GITA, which were serially delivered in America before the talented audiences beginning from 1907. Swami Abhedananda delivered the discourses on the BHAGAVAD GITA in sixtyfour lectures. This eighth volume contains only thirtytwo lectures of them, which have been arranged in thirtytwo chapters with different headings. The book has been named as BHAGAVAD GITA: THE DIVINE MESSAGE i.e. the Celestial Messages, which were delivered by Sri Krishna to the warrior Arjuna in the battle-field of Kurukhetra in the Epic Age. This BHAGAVAD GITA forms the part of the *Mahabharata*, the Great Epic.

These memorable lectures of the BHAGAVAD GITA, in this volume, have been carefully and critically edited, and annotated with Notes, portions of Commentaries of Sankara and Madhusudana Sarasvati, and Glossaries of Anandagiri and Sridhara-swami, where necessary, by Swami Prajnanananda. A Preface has also been added by him. Moreover, the Sanskrit Texts of the chapters I & II of the BHAGAVAD GITA have been appended in the last portion so as to cover the entire Texts of the GITA, together with their English Translations made by Swami Abhedananda himself.

These lectures by Swami Abhedananda are the new and scientific expositions of the BHAGAVAD GITA carrying an original and special stamp of their own.

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General Secretary,
Swami Abhedananda Centenary
Celebration, 1966-67.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	...	...	...	...	3
INTRODUCTION	I:	...	...	...	19
		<i>Subject</i>		<i>Page</i>	
INTRODUCTION	II:	Krishna and Christ	...		26
CHAPTER	I:	Beginning of the Divine Message			33
CHAPTER	II:	Mortality and Immortality of the Soul	...	...	45
CHAPTER	III:	True Nature of the Soul	...		60
CHAPTER	IV:	Atman is Without Beginning and End	...	...	74
CHAPTER	V:	Vedantic Conception of the Soul			89
CHAPTER	VI:	The Manifested and the Unmanifested	...	...	101
CHAPTER	VII:	Method of Attaining the Highest Knowledge	...	...	114
CHAPTER	VIII:	Performance of Works and Control of Senses	...	...	130
CHAPTER	IX:	Self-Mastery or Self-Control	...		145
CHAPTER	X:	Work for the Divine Being	...		159
CHAPTER	XI:	Wise Men and Their Works	...		173
CHAPTER	XII:	Mind and Self-Control	...		189
CHAPTER	XIII:	Practice of Jnana-Yoga	...		202
CHAPTER	XIV:	Path to Salvation	...	...	216
CHAPTER	XV:	Work for Work's Sake	...		229
CHAPTER	XVI:	Divine Being is Dwelling Everywhere	...	...	243
CHAPTER	XVII:	The Brahmarpana-Karmayoga	...		257
CHAPTER	XVIII:	Two Paths: Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga	...	...	274

	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
CHAPTER XIX:	Real Indifference or Non-Attachment	289
CHAPTER XX:	God is Impartial and is Like a Witness	306
CHAPTER XXI:	Desire Brings Attachment and Pain	317
CHAPTER XXII:	A True Sannyasi and a Yogi ..	334
CHAPTER XXIII:	Purified Mind is Our Real Friend	345
CHAPTER XXIV:	The State of a Self-Realized Yogi	363
CHAPTER XXV:	Practice and Dispassion are Necessary	381
CHAPTER XXVI:	A Yogi is Never Lost ...	394
CHAPTER XXVII:	God is in Everything and Everywhere	410
CHAPTER XXVIII:	A Seer of God is a Liberated Soul	424
CHAPTER XXIX:	Purified Souls reach the State of Superconsciousness ...	439
CHAPTER XXX:	The Absolute Can Be Realized by Yoga	453
CHAPTER XXXI:	Akshara-Brahma-Yoga ...	468
CHAPTER XXXII:	Highest Goal is Reached By The Yogi	482
APPENDIX	Sanskrit Texts of the Chapter I and II of the 'Bhagavad Gita' and Their English Translations by Swami Abhedananda himself	497

BHAGAVAD GITA
THE DIVINE MESSAGE

PREFACE

The universal teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, or the divine message of Sri Krishna, forms the part of the *Bhishmaparva* of the *Mahabharata*. The divine teachings of the *Gita* has been depicted in the dialogue between Sri Krishna and the warrior Arjuna. Arjuna faced the terrible and fierce battle of the *dhrumakshetra* Kurukshetra and placed his chariot in between the Kaurava and Pandava soldiers, and Sri Krishna was his charioteer or *Sarathi*, friend and guide in the battle-field. Dr. Radhakrishnan says that Arjuna's cry or demand was simple yet tremendous and damaging one, "significant of the tragedy of man, which all, who can see beyond the actual drama of the hour, can recognize. The mood of despair, in which Arjuna is found in the first chapter of the *Gita*, is what the mystics call the dark night of the soul, an essential step in the upward path. * * Krishna stands for the voice of God, delivering his message in the thrilling notes, warning Arjuna against dejection of spirit. * * As the dialogue proceeds, the dramatic element disappears. The echoes of the battle-field die away, and we have only an interview between God and man".

The entire *Bhagavad Gita* has been divided into eighteen chapters and each chapter has been named with the titles ending with Yoga, such as, (1) arjuna-vishada-yoga, (2) sankhya-yoga, (3) karma-yoga, (4) jnana-yoga, (5) sannyasa-yoga, (6) dhyana-yoga, (7) jnana-vijnana-yoga, (8) akshara-brahma-yoga, (9) raja-yoga, (10) vibhuti-yoga, (11) visvarupa-darshana-yoga, (12) bhakti-yoga, (13) kshetra-kshetrajna-yoga, (14) gunatraya-vibhaga-yoga, (15) purushottama-yoga, (16) daivasura-sampad-vibhaga-yoga, (17) shraddhatraya-vibhaga-yoga, (18) moksha-yoga. Now these eighteen chapters or Yogas can be classified into four main heads, *karmayoga*, *bhaktiyoga*, *gnanayoga* and *rajayoga* or spiritual practices of work as worship, devotion, concentration and meditation, and knowledge.

The *Bhagavad Gita* can be said to be the extract or essence of the Upanishads, which are known as Vedanta: "*vedanta-*

namo upanishad-pramanam" In the contemplative composition or *dhyana* of the *Gita*, it has been mentioned:

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।

पाथो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

That is, the *Upanishads* are like the cows, those bear milk or *amrita* and Sri Krishna, the milkman, churned or extracted that milk or *amrita* from those cows or *Upanishads* and distributed it to the wise (*sudhi*) ones who are seekers after highest knowledge. From this it is evident that the *Bhagavad Gita* is a condensed form of all the *Upanishads* that teach the supreme knowledge of the Brahman.

Swami Abhedananda says that as Jesus the Christ was a historical person (though scholars and historians like Strauss, Robertson, Connybear, Drews and others refuted the historicity of Jesus), so was Sri Krishna. The Swami has discussed the lives and personalities of both the Saviours, Sri Krishna and Jesus the Christ, from various authentic sources in the *Introduction* of this book, as Mr. J. M. Robertson discussed on 'Christ and Krishna' in his monumental work, *Christianity and Mythology*. But the Swami's treatment on 'Krishna and Christ' is quite different and at the same time new and novel.

The Swami writes: "The similarities between the birth and death stories of Krishna and those of Christ and the coincidences of the principal events and miracles in the lives of those two Saviours are so great and startling that the first Christian missionaries who entered India . . . were astonished . . . They were like two brothers or two manifestations of the same Divinity and two different names separated only by time and space." Now it can be asked as to why Swami Abhedananda compared the life and teachings of Krishna with those of Christ, while discussing about the divine teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the most sacred scripture of the Hindus. To this it can be said that as the Swami delivered his lectures on the *Gita* before the talented Western audiences, he comparatively discussed the lives and personalities of those two Saviours for their easy appreciation.

The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* is divine, synthetic and universal. The *Gita* teaches theism and "regards God as the

supreme and perfect person (Purushottama). It is a synthetic universal message of the supreme Spirit, and it harmonizes all the contradictory views and doctrines of different religious sects and practices. It advocates dualistic monism, preaches the cult of Vasudeva-Krishna, and enjoins different Yogas for the attainment of Godconsciousness". Arjuna can be regarded as a spiritual aspirant amidst the ocean of *samsara* or world, and Sri Krishna as a divine guide, faithful friend and realized *Guru*. Amidst hundreds and thousands of works and duties of the world, Sri Krishna taught Arjuna the unreality and fleeting nature of the world and at the same time illumined him with divine knowledge. Well has it been said by Sri Aurobindo in his *Essays on the Gita*: "We must accept the insistence of the author and give its full importance to this recurrent preoccupation of the Teacher and the disciple. The teachings of the *Gita* must, therefore, be regarded not merely in the light of a general spiritual philosophy or ethical doctrine, but as bearing upon practical crisis in the application of ethics and spirituality to human life". Similarly it has been said by the Western savant, Rudolf Otto, in his *The Original Gita* (The Song of the Supreme Exalted One): "In India again, and also by Western commentators, the work is regarded principally as the fundamental doctrinal *Text* of the Hindu '*bhakti* religion'. This, in the first place, is the religious attitude which is trust, faith and love, turns to the Personal God Who is the Redeemer from the evils of *samsara*—of a wandering existence or migration in the universe; but in its modern form the spiritual attitude just referred to, doctrines selected from the expanding systems of *Sankhya* and *Yoga*, from the ancient moralistic doctrine of the three *gunas* or 'constituents of Nature', from the theology of the old Vedic sacrificial cult and, finally, from Vedantic speculation and soteriological teaching about the transcendent superpersonal Brahman which arise from the cult".

Now the opinions about the form, philosophy, and essence of the *Bhadavad Gita* may differ from one another, but most of the thinkers hold that *Prakriti*, the embodiment of the *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamās*, is the material cause of the world-appearance and it is modified into the world under the guidance of Divine Will of God, the Prime-Mover and Spiritual Spirit. God is considered as the ground of empirical being

and non-being. He is the trans-empirical supreme person (Purushottama) beyond *kshara-Purusha* and *akshara-Purusha*. The *kshara-Purusha* is the finite mobile Spirit which is manifested in the corporate body of conscious embodied souls. The *ashkara-Purusha* is the infinite immobile Spirit, which transcends the infinite mobile Spirits. God, as Purushottama, transcends both and yet is not an abstract universal, but the concrete determinate Spirit, the embodiment of eternal being, consciousness and bliss and eternal *dharma*.

In the fourteenth chapter, *gunatraya-vibhaga-yoga* has been explained and this entire chapter has been devoted to *purushottama-yoga*, in which the absolute Reality or Purushottama, as maintained by the *Gita*, has been explained. In the 27th *sloka*, Sri Krishna has said,

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।

शश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ।

Sri Krishna says that the absolute Brahman is the ground or substratum (*adhisthana*) of the universe with all its objects, sentient and insentient, and that ground should be determined, or rather be realized by knowledge or *jnanavichara*. The permanent and imperishable *dharma* is absolute happiness which is no other than the Brahman. In the chapter of *purushottama-yoga*, two realities, *kshara* and *akshara* have been explained as,

द्वाविसौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥

That is, the *kshara-Purusha* is composed of the world and the beings, which are fleeting and perishable, and the *akshara-Purusha* is possessed of *mayasakti* or *Prakriti*, by the help of which He creates i.e. projects the manifold world with its living and non-living beings. Here the word *kutastha* of the *Gita* bears different meaning or significance than the word *kutastha* of Vedanta, which signifies the idea of indeterminates (*nirgunatva*) of the transcending Advaita Brahman. The word *kutastha* has been explained by Sankara and Madhusudana Sarasvati and also by Sridhara Swami and Anandagiri thus:

I. Sankara says:

“क्षरश्च क्षरतीति विनाशेको राशिरपरः पुरुषोऽक्षरस्तद्विपरीतो भगवतो मायाशक्तिः
* * । कूटस्थः कूटो राशिरिव स्थितः, अथवा कूटो माया ब्रह्मना * * कुटिलतेति
पर्यायाः * * ।”

II. Anandagiri says:

“कार्यकारणाख्यौ राशी दर्शयित्वा राश्यन्तरं दर्शयति ।”

III. Madhusudana Sarasvati says:

“कूटस्थः भगवन्मायाशक्तिरूपः कारणोपाधिः संसारबीजत्वेनानन्त्यदक्षर उच्यते ।
आभ्यां क्षराक्षराभ्यां विलक्षणः क्षराक्षरोपाधिद्वयदोषेणास्पृष्टो नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभाव
उत्तम उत्कृष्टतमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः * * ।”

IV. Sridhara Swami says:

“कूटस्थश्चेतनो भोक्ता” ।

V. Baladeva Vidyabhushana says:

“कूटस्थः सदैकावस्थो मुक्तस्त्वक्षरः” ।

So this Purushottama is known to the devotees (*bhaktas*)
as *Isvara* The *Gita* says,

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।

यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य विभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥

यस्माद् क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

This Purushottama *Isvara* of the *Gita* is *avyaya* Narayana:
Madhusudana Sarasvati says in his commentary:

“अव्ययः सर्वविकारशून्यः ईश्वरः सर्वस्य नियन्ता नारायणः स उत्तमः पुरुष परमात्मेत्युदाहृत
इत्यन्वयः । ‘स उत्तमः पुरुषः’ इति श्रुते (छाः उः) ।”

In the 15.19 *sloka*, Sri Krishna says:

“स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन ।”

Madhusudana Sarasvati says:

“सर्वविद् मां सर्वात्मनं वेत्तीति स एव सर्वज्ञः सर्वभावेन प्रेमलक्षणेन
भक्तियोगेन * * ।”

So the *Gita* believes in Purushottam *Isvara* through devotion
or *bhakti*.

Here the "immutability of the Absolute and the activity of *Ivara* are both taken over in the conception of Purushottama." Sri Krishna says that knowledge of the absolute Reality, Purushottama, is the secret of all secrets: "*guhyatamam-shastram idam*". Sri Krishna, therefore, instructs all to completely surrender to Him (*bhajati mam sarvabhavena*) and He will rescue them from the dark abyss of ignorance and will impart knowledge of the absolute Reality. It should be noticed that Sri Krishna has used the first person, 'I', 'Me', 'Mine' (*aham, mam, mayi*) etc. in many places of the *Gita* in order to express His all-pervading nature and all-embracing personality, and so when He has used the first person, He remains there as *atmasta* i.e. identified with His real transcending nature. Swamis Vivekananda and Abhedananda are of the opinion that whenever Sri Krishna used in the *Gita* 'I, Me and Mine', He used them being *atmasta* or identified with the divine idea of 'Greater I'. Dr. Radhakrishnan puts it in a different way. He says: "When Krishna calls upon us to become his devotees, when he shows the *visvarupa* or the world-form, whenever he uses the first person, we have references to the manifested aspect of the Supreme. This side of divine nature is involved in the work of creation, where it loses itself in the succession of time and the waves of becoming. Beyond it all is another status, the silent and the immutable, than which there is nothing higher. The two together form the Purushottama." In reality, Purushottama transcends the categories of cause and effect (*karya-karanatva dharma*). It is neither *kshara*, nor *akshara*, but transcends *kshara* and *akshara*, or rather forms the background (*pratistha*) of *kshara* and *akshara*—*vyakta* and *avyakta*—*Hiranyagarbha* and *Ivara*. This Purushottama is the neutral point which is neither the subject, nor the object, and at the same time connects and harmonizes the subject and the object. Besides, the *Gita* (13th Chapt.) has discussed about *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna*, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, *jneya* and *jnana* i.e. *jiva* and *Ivara*:

‘क्षेत्रं मायाकल्पितं मिथ्या, क्षेत्रज्ञश्च परमार्थसत्य * * मोक्षसाधनत्वज्ञानम्।’

This *paramarthika-satya* is the Brahman.

Here it should be mentioned that the Sankhya-yoga, as

enunciated by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (second chapter), bears some separate and new meaning or interpretation from the meaning or interpretation that has been depicted in Kapila's *Sankhya* system that rejects the existence of God (*Isvara*) as the prime-cause of evolution of the world-process. The *Gita* has perhaps incorporated the ideas of indestructibility of everything from Kapila's *Sankhya*:

- (क) नास्त्यतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।२।१६
 (ख) अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।२।१७
 (ग) अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।२।२८

But the Sankhya-yoga of the *Gita* admits the existence as well as utility of God as the Creator and Prime-mover of the world with its twentyfour *tattvas* (*chaturvimsati-tattva*) like Kapila who says: *Isvara* is *asiddha*. So the Sankhya-yoga of the *Bhagavad Gita* can be known as *sa-Isvara-yoga* (Yoga that admits God), and it contains purely the instructions on the 'doctrine of realization' or *tattvajñāna* (vide *Gita*, II.11-30 *slokas*). In the *Gita*, the Yoga or Sankhya-yoga is the means of training of intellect (*buddhi*) so as to act without asking for the fruit of work. And the *Gita* says about skill or dexterity (*kaushala*) with regard to actions (*karma*): योग कर्मसु कौशलम् । Sri Krishna says that the wise "who thus armed in spirit, concern themselves not with the fruit produced by action, are released from the bonds of rebirth and go to abode free from sickness". Therefore, the Sankhya-yoga, as advised by the *Gita*, is known as *Buddhi-yoga* that brings discrimination (*viveka*) between the real and the unreal and thus unfashens the bond *samsara*:

एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगं त्विमां शृणु ।
 बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धुं प्रहास्यसि ॥२।३९

In fact, Sankhya-yoga of the *Gita* brings *niskarma*-Karma-yoga, known as the *moksha-mārga* i.e. the path to release and realization. The *Gita* has, therefore, admitted three *gunas* like *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and has said that a man who aspires to be free from the chain of *samsara* (world), should tran-

scend the chain of three *gunas*, which are the categories of *maya* or nescience:

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥—गीता २।४५

Sri Krishna says in conclusion:

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

मिद्धयसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद् योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥

—गीता २।४८, ५०

That is, Yoga, or Sankhya-yoga, or Buddhi-yoga, or Karma-yoga, brings desireless or *nirvasana* that causes liberation or *moksha* and they, who aspire for fruits of works, are miser. Therefore, do work without asking result:

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥२।७१

Similarly Jnana-yoga, Sannyasa-yoga and Dhyana-yoga, as advocated in the *Bhagavad Gita*, bear somewhat new and novel interpretations or meanings from those, depicted in Advaita Vedanta and Patanjali's Yoga-system. But it should be remembered that the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* firmly stand on the solid rock of the *Upanishad* which is no other than Vedanta.

The *Bhagavad Gita* has reconciled or synthesised intellect and intuition (*buddhi* and *bodhi*) and has directed them towards the highest plane of spiritual apprehension, nay, towards the sphere of divine realization of the secondless absolute Reality. In the letter to Flaccus, the mystic philosopher, Plotinus has expressed this highest plane in a different way. He says: "There are different roads by which this end (of spiritual apprehension) may be reached: The love of beauty which exalts the poets, that devotion to One." Opinions or expressions of the great savants may differ, but the teachings of the *Gita* lead men to the definite goal of salvation or *moksha*.

Sri Krishna has said in the *Gita* that self-surrender (*atma-samarpana*) is the best means to reach the highest destination of human life, and this instruction reminds us the *vakalma* (self-surrender) of Girish Chandra Ghose to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Sri Krishna says in the *moksha-yoga* (eighteenth chapter of the *Gita*):

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
 मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥
 सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
 अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Now, before suggesting the idea of सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं etc. Sri Krishna has advised Arjuna to completely surrender unto him (18 57-65):

- (a) चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।
 * * * मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥
- (b) मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गानि मत्प्रसादात् तरिष्यसि ।
- (c) तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
 तत्प्रसादात् परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥
- (d) मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

Madhusudana Saraswati writes regarding it:

इदमेव परमं तत्त्वं नातोऽधिकमस्तीति विचारपूर्वकेण प्रेमकर्षेण सर्वानात्मचिन्ताशून्यया मनोवृत्त्या तैलधारावदविच्छिन्नया सततं चिन्तयेत्यर्थः ।

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: If you are devoted to me and give up all antagonistic religious views, doctrines, and dogmas, and surrender your self unto me, I assure you that I shall rescue you from all sins and from ignorance (*maya*). Swami Abhedananda says that until and unless we surrender and renounce everything for the cause of realizing the *Atman* and make ourselves the playground of the Almighty, so long the categories of *jnana*, *jneya* and *jnata* will not be removed, and so long we shall not be able to make ourselves free from the bindings of *samsara*. We should never take the unreal material body and organs as real *Atman*, but should go beyond attach-

ment (*kama*), attraction (*raga*) for the material things, egoity, vanity, and everything, that cause diversion of our mind from the *Atman*, and when we shall be able to concentrate and meditate upon the immortal *Atman*, we shall realize the Brahman even in this life. And after attaining the supreme knowledge of the Brahman, we shall be above all sorrows, desires and bondages. Sri Krishna says further,

अहंकारं वलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।
विमुच्यः निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥
ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

That is, he who has attained the Brahman, transcends all sorrows and desires.

Now the *sloka* 2.46 of the *Gita*:

यावानर्थं उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।
तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥

reminds us about the state of a Self-realized *sthitaprajna* or *jvanmukta*. The *Gita* says that all individual desires and enjoyments are the part and parcel of or are included in the all-inclusive secondless Brahman. Anandagiri has said in the glossary:

“स तावान् आत्मविदः स्वरूपभूते सुखेऽन्तर्भवति परिच्छिन्नानन्दानाम् अपरिच्छिन्नानन्दान्तर्भावाभ्युपगमात् ‘एतस्यैवानन्दस्यान्यानि भूतानि मात्रामूपजीवन्ति’ इति श्रुतेः । (बृहदारण्यक उ० ४।३।३२) ।”

Madhusudana Sarasvati has said in his commentary:

“तथाच निष्कामकर्मभिः शुद्धान्तःकरणस्य तवात्मज्ञानोदये परब्रह्मानन्दप्राप्तिः स्यात् तयैव स सर्वानन्दप्राप्तौ न क्षुद्धानन्दप्राप्तिनिवन्धनवैयग्रथावकाशः । अतः परमानन्दप्रापकाय तत्तज्ञानाय निष्कामकर्मणि कुर्वित्यभिप्रायः ।”

The author of the commentary, *Bhāsyotkarsha-dīpikā* also has said:

“फलाभिसन्धिरहितस्य तस्य तु ज्ञानप्राप्ता सर्वकर्मफलानां यस्मिन् ब्रह्मसुखेऽन्तर्भावात् तदप्राप्तिः समस्तानर्थनिवृत्तिश्च भवति ।”

The real contention of the *sloka* is this that when a man does everything in this world of action without asking any result of the work, his mind is purified being concentrated in the prime object, the *Atman*, or the Brahman, which is no other than an immediate absorption in the eternal enjoyment i.e. *Brahmananda* or *Brahmanirvana*, he then attains all knowledge (of the universe) being in tune with the all-consciousness Brahman. All his desires are fulfilled, all knots of his mind are unfastened and all doubts are solved. And so all the commentators say:

“फलकामनया हि कर्म कुर्वन् फलस्य हेतुरुद्पादको भवति । त्वं तु निष्कामः
सन् कर्मफलहेतुर्मातुः । न हि निष्कामेन भगवदर्पणबुद्ध्या कृतं कर्म फलाय कल्पत
इत्युक्तम्”—(मधुसूदन सरस्वती) ।

Sri Krishna says that work (*karma*) is not a bondage, as by Karma Yoga a man can remove the darkness of ignorance (*ajnana*) and can attain to Godconsciousness. Only the secret (*kaushala*) is this that all works should be performed in the spirit of worship of God (‘ईश्वरार्पणबुद्ध्या’) and that spirit will purify the heart and will enable us to realize the Brahman-consciousness. All through the teachings of the *Gita*, Sri Krishna has instructed men to work and to work without asking the result in the spirit of worship.

There are many commentaries and glossaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*. The teachers like Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Srikantha, Ballabha, Sridhara Swami, Madhusudana Sarasvati, Baladeva Vidyabhushan, Visvanatha Chakravarti, Abhinavagupta and others have written commentaries and glossaries from different viewpoints, and though they differ in their views and arguments, yet all of them are of the same opinion that emancipation of the soul from the bondage of ignorance or *samsara* is essential. Sankara has interpreted all the teachings of the *Gita* from the non-dualistic (*Advaita*) viewpoint and has said that Sri Krishna, the Purushottama, is the embodiment of highest consciousness, and until and unless we attain that consciousness or Brahman-knowledge, we shall not be able to go beyond *maya* and *samsara*. Madhusudana Sarasvati has followed Sankara and has interpreted the whole *Gita* from

monistic standpoint, though sometimes we notice the devotional tendency of his mind towards Parabrahman, Vasudeva-Krishna:

वंशीविभूषितकराञ्चनीरदाभात् पीताम्बरादरुणविम्बफलाधरोष्ठात् ।

पूर्णन्दुसून्दरमुखारविन्दुनेत्रात् कृष्णात् परं कमपि तत्त्वमहं न जाने ॥

Ramanuja has interpreted the teachings of the *Gita* from the qualified non-dualistic standpoint (*visishtadvaitavada*). It is said that he had developed his philosophy of *chit* and *achit* on the attributes of *Isvara* or the Brahman, or it can be said that Ramanuja's concepts of *chit* (*Isvara* or God) and *achit* (*jiva* and *jagat*) as attributes of the Brahman are developed from the concepts of *para-Prakriti* and *apara-Prakriti* of the *Bhagavad Gita*. *Maya* or nescience is regarded by Ramanuja as a real appearance and a power of God (*Isvara-sakti*), and by the help of that inherent power God creates the world and all living and non-living beings, or God creates various creatures out of his *Prakriti* according to their merits and demerits (*dharma* and *adharma*). But *maya* or nescience has been looked upon as fleeting and impermanent something which is neither existent (*sat*), nor non-existent (*asat*), nor existent and non-existent (*sadasat*), but inexplicable (*anirvachaniya*), and the Brahman is the only real and all things other than the Brahman is unreal.

Sridhara Swami has throughout maintained the doctrine of devotion (*bhakti*), though sometimes he is inclined to the doctrine of knowledge with devotion (*jnanamishra-bhakti*). Nimbarka has interpreted the teachings of the *Gita* from the doctrine of dualistic monism (*dvaitadvaitavada*), as he insists on difference as well as non-difference or identity between the Brahman and the world with its individual souls. Bhaskaracharya and Yadavaprakash have interpreted the teachings of the *Gita* in similar way. Madhva is a staunch follower of dualism and so he has interpreted the teachings of the *Gita* from the dualistic viewpoint (*dvaitavada*). Madhva practically recognizes the five distinctions of God (*Isvara*) like the individual souls (*jiva*), the individual (*jiva*) and matter (*jada*), one individual soul and another (*eka-jiva* and *anya-jiva*), and one material thing and another (*eka-jada-padartha* and *anya-jada-*

padartha, and so he has finally constructed his philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* on the doctrine of dualism and realism.

Swami Abhedananda has followed the path of the ancient ones, but has thrown some new light with the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, together with the theories of modern science and contemporary thoughts. The Swami says: "Through all the acts of His (Sri Krishna's) life, whether in politics, in war, or in the duties of householder, He emphasised and proved the truth of the grand ethical law, that where there is virtue, there is the prospect of victory and glorious life, both in this world and hereafter, and whenever there are vice, unrighteousness, injustice, and immorality, there is destruction, physical, moral and spiritual"

Swami Abhedananda has divided his entire discussions on the *Bhagavad Gita* into sixtyfour illuminating chapters. In the first chapter, the Swami has prepared the ground for his discussions on the *Gita*. He has said that the individual soul or *jivatman* is the commander-in-chief of the chariot of the body with all the armies of different forces that are working around us, and Sri Krishna is the Divine Spirit or *Paramatman* within us. In our everyday life, if we act in the *samsara* under the guidance of *buddhi* and *viveka*, as Arjuna fought in the battle-field of the Kurukshetra under the able guidance of Sri Krishna, then we will ultimately reach the goal of all religions.

Swami Abhedananda says that senses of I, Me, and Mine are the root of all evils and bondages in the world (*samsara*), and the senses of Thy, Thee, and Thine bring freedom to the soul. A wise man is one who knows the secret of Thy, Thee, and Thine, because he ultimately comes to know the way of getting rid of the senses of I, Me, and Mine, which is no other than egotism and selfishness. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has said: "*naham naham, tuhu tuhu*" i.e. the senses of I, Me, and Mine should be removed and the way of self-resignation to the will of God should be adopted. Sri Krishna also instructs all that they should not be weak, but should be strong enough to face all kinds of obstruction and danger so as to realize that self-delusion is the cause of misery, sorrow and suffering. Real peace and happiness come with the removal of self-delusion and fear of death and bondage, and

as soon as we shall be able to make ourselves the playground of the Almighty, we shall attain Godconsciousness and eternal knowledge.

The second chapter deals with the teachings that true nature of the soul is immortal. It does not die, as death happens only in the material body. As a man changes his old garments and puts on new ones, so the soul (*jivatman*) leaves his old and worn-out body and enters into a new one. So we find that the real nature of the *jivatman* is deathless and immortal. The *Atman*, the real form and essence of the *jivatman*, is beginningless and endless, and it is above time, space and causation, which are known as nescience or *maya*.

Swami Abhedananda says that mind substance is the medium of contact or communication between the gross material body and the immaterial immortal soul (*jivatman* and *Paramatman*), between matter and spirit, and also between the soul (*jivatman*) and the senses and the objects of the senses (*indriyas* and *indriya-vishayas*). So if the mind is impure, it cannot communicate, or it communicates with wrong knowledge instead of right knowledge. The *Bhagavad Gita* and all other Scriptures of the Hindus, says the Swami, teach that the mind should be clean and transparent and should be detached from all kinds of desires and craving so as to catch the undying self-effulgent light of the immortal *Atman*. The *Yoga-darshana* and the *Bhagavad Gita* say that we should adopt repeated practices and renunciation: "*abhyasa-vairagyabhyam tannirodhah*". *Abhasa* means repeated efforts for spiritual practice ("*tatra yatno'bhasah*"), and *vairagya* means detachment from the sense-objects (*vishaya-vitrishna*). Besides, Vedanta says that right discrimination (*viveka*) is necessary for ascertaining reality from unreality. Right knowledge removes the knots of ignorance and doubt, and enables men to attain the transcendental Reality.

Now it can be said that Swami Abhedananda's treatment on the *Bhagavad Gita* is somewhat different and new. He has not contradicted the views and conclusions, forwarded by Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Bhallabha and other teachers and commentators, but, at the same time, he has not wholly followed their methods of explanation. But yet his explanation of the *Gita* can be said to be something

new and original. The Swami has not explained the *Gita sloke* by *sloka* of all the chapters (*adhyayas*), but has selected and explained the main and important *slokas* of every chapter of the *Gita* and has given their religion, ethics and philosophy. The Swami has also given the psychology of the *Bhagavad Gita* and has compared it with the psychological movements of the mind of every man and has given their solution. In fact, Swami Abhedananda's chief aim and object of the lectures on the *Gita* are to represent the real import and central religio-philosophical thoughts and ideas, contained in the *Gita*. Besides, his explanation of the *Gita* teachings are elaborate, logical and analytical and at the same time very lucid, simple and convincing to all minds.

Sri Ramakrishna said that the real meaning or significance of the *Gita* is realized when we utter the word *Gita* repeatedly, i.e. if we say the word *Gita* in a repeated way, we find the words *tyagi tyagi tyagi*, which mean renunciation (*tyaga—vairagya*). As long as we remain as selfish, being entangled in the net of *samsara* or desires (*vasanas*), so long we shall not be able to realize the real essence of the *Bhagavad Gita*. So Sri Krishna says that detachment is freedom, whereas attachment is bondage, and he, therefore, instructs everyone to perform work in this world of duties disinterestedly, without asking results thereof, because desire for the result of works are no other than the chain that binds men and drags them into the den of delusion or *maya*: "*phale sakto nibadhyate*". We have right to do works only and not to ask their results: "*karmanye vadhikaraste na phaleshu kadachana*". This is known as the doctrine of renunciation (*tyaga* or *vairagya*), which brings with it the boon of self-surrender (*atma-samarpana*) to the will of God, delivered these messages for the good and welfare of the to the philosophy and religion of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and it has already been said before that Sri Krishna has laid stress upon this doctrine of renunciation and self-surrender thus: "*sarva-dharma parityaja*". Swami Abhedananda says that the entire teachings of the *Gita* should be taken or considered as a living inspiration for attaining God, and Sri Krishna, the Incarnation of God, delivered these messages for the good and welfare of the human society at large and also for the sincere *sadhakas* for emancipation of bondage.

It is to note that Swami Abhedananda translated into English the *slokas* of the *Gita* from Chapter I to Chapter X. These have also been incorporated in the Appendix.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

INTRODUCTION

I

Sri Krishna, the Christ of India, is regarded as a Saviour of mankind, and His teachings are known as the *Bhagavad Gita* or the 'Song-Celestial'. Those who have studied the Divine Ode or Dialogue, have often wondered at the vast wisdom of its Teacher, and have asked: "Who was Sri Krishna ? When did he live, and what were His works ?" Oriental scholars and Christian missionaries have often compared His life and teachings with those of Jesus the Christ. Some of them have denied the historical personality of Sri Krishna, as some of the Western scholars have denied that of Christ, while others have tried to prove that He was a mythical god of ancient India and that He did not exist at all. Again, after noticing the wonderful similarity that exists between the lives of Sri Krishna and Christ, quite a few have come to the conclusion that the whole story of Sri Krishna's life and teachings is based upon the life and sayings of Jesus the Christ, and that the Krishna-cult of the Hindus had not existed before the advent or arrival of the early Christian missionaries in that country. Furthermore, some of the followers of Christ were so astonished at finding in India a religion so near to their own that they could only account for it by supposing that the Devil, foreseeing the advent of their saviour, originated a system of religion in advance of His and just like it. All these ingenious explanations of the Christian scholars and missionaries have not succeeded in quenching the fire of reverence, devotion and love, which was kindled upon the altar of the Hindu heart by the unparalleled character and divine powers of Krishna, the God-Incarnate and Saviour of mankind.

Waves of conquest and religious fanaticism have come to India from the West, one after another, and have swept away by their tremendous on-rush millions and millions of lives and the most glorious spiritual monuments which this country had produced, but still the marvellous ideal and spiritual kingdom of Sri Krishna have remained for ages firm as the unshakable

Himalayas, defying their strength and destructive powers. The fanatical Mohammedans invaded India, holding their scripture, the Koran, in one hand and a sword in the other, and brought terror and havoc into the heart of Hindu communities, ruined the temples of Sri Krishna, looted the country, massacred the innocent priests and priestesses, sages and saints, and converted many to their faith of Islam by mere brute force ; notwithstanding all this, the illimitable powers of Divine Krishna have survived the ravages of time. He still reigns over the hearts of the Hindu people and will continue to reign for all time to come.

The Christian missionaries, supported by the enormous resources of the English-speaking nations, have tried with head and heart to place their ideal of Jesus upon the alter of Sri Krishna and to convert His followers to their religion, but the undying divine powers which Sri Krishna once manifested will surely be able to withstand the futile efforts of ordinary mortals.

The name of Sri Krishna is heard in almost every corner of the Hindu community and throughout the length and breadth of the vast empire His sweet and holy name is uttered and reverentially repeated at all hours of the day—in sleeping, in walking, in working, in prosperity, in adversity, in times of woe and suffering, as well as during festivities and national rejoicings. The popular songs which are sung in India by the illiterate masses, describe the superhuman deeds and boyish sports of the Divine Krishna, the Shepherd of mankind. In victory and in defeat, in nuptial ceremony or crematory rite, at the time of birth and death, the name of Krishna is uttered by millions of worshippers with deepest feelings of devotion, love, and reverence. In short, they have coupled the name of Sri Krishna with everything that takes place upon the earth whether good, bad, or indifferent. For the last three thousand years He has ruled over the heart of the Hindu nation as the most beloved Lord and Saviour of all.

The life of Sri Krishna, to the Hindu mind, is as historical as the life of Jesus the Christ to the Christian. It is, of course, a well-known fact that no one has yet succeeded in giving authentic evidences to establish the truth of all the stories that we read in the Synoptic Gospels regarding the life of Christ. On the contrary, the historic personality of Jesus has been

denied over and over again by a good many noted scholars and higher critics of Europe and America. Still, the majority of Christians, disregarding their opinions, believe in their Lord Christ as a historic personage, worship Him, revere Him, and expect to obtain salvation through Him after death. Similar is the case with Sri Krishna, the Hindu Christ. There have been scholars in India who have denied His historic personality ; some have regarded Him as a mythical deity, while others have given authentic proofs of His earthly career. The masses of people, however, do not recognise who lived among the Hindu people as a great Hero and showed His divine powers in order to establish His spiritual kingdom on earth. Whether or not we give the exact time, date, and years of the advent of Sri Krishna, it is certain that His name had been known in India hundreds of years before the Christian era. Centuries before the birth of Jesus the Christ, Sri Krishna had not only been loved, honoured and worshipped, but had been also recognised by the vast majority of Hindus as God-Incarnate and the Saviour of mankind. The most authentic evidence in favour of this point can be gathered from the historical accounts of Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador of Seleucus, who lived in India in the court of the Emperor Chandragupta, the great monarch, in the fourth century B.C.

After the invasion of India by Alexander the Great, between 333 and 237 B.C., Seleucus Nikator became his successor and ruled over the entire region between the Euphrates and the Indus, and sent his ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, the reigning Emperor of India. These are all historical facts. Megasthenes lived in India for several years and left some records describing his experiences there which have been preserved and handed down by Arrian, the Greek historian. Among other things Megasthenes says: "He, the Indian Hercules, excelled all men in strength of body and spirit, he had purged the whole earth and sea of evil, and founded many cities, and after his death, divine honours were paid to him". "This Hercules is especially worshipped by the Sourasenians, and Indian people, in whose land are two great cities, Mathura and Cleisobara, and through it flows the navigable river Johares (Jamuna). This Cleisobara or Chrysobara is identified by some with Calisapura, but it was supposed by Pliny, the historian, to

be the same as Krishnapura, the city of Krishna, probably modern Dwarka, which was founded by Sri Krishna. Ptolemais mentions Mathura as the city of the gods. Prof. Lassen identifies this Indian Hercules with Krishna, while Prof. Wilson and other scholars think that the Hercules of the Greek writers was indubitably Balarama, the brother of Sri Krishna.

Respecting the Hercules of India, Captain Wilford says: "The Indian Hercules, according to Cicero, was called Belus. He is the same as Bala, the brother of Krishna, and both are conjointly worshipped at Muttra; indeed, they are considered as one inseparable *Avatara* or Incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Bala is represented as a stout man with a club in his hand. He is called also Balarama. As Bala, springing from Vishnu or Hari, he is certainly Hericula, Hericulus, Hercules."

Arrian says that Alexander the Great saw those cities and other kingdoms governed by Saurasenas, or the descendants of the royal family of Sri Krishna. "Both Arrian and Strabo assert that the God, Krishna, was anciently worshipped in Mathura on the river Jamuna, where he is worshipped even today, but the emblems and attributes essential to this deity have also been transplanted into the mythologies of the West."¹

These historical accounts show how unfounded are the remarks of the Christian missionaries who believe that the whole story of the life of Sri Krishna and His teachings was based upon those of Jesus the Christ. On the contrary, it is proved that Sri Krishna had existed centuries before Christ and His teachings had already been in writing at the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great. Sir William Jones, one of the Oriental scholars in Sanskrit, after residing in India for several years, said: "That the name of Krishna and the general outline of his history were known in India long anterior to the birth of our saviour and probably to the time of Homer (900 B.C.) we know very certainly."

Sir Godfrey Higgins, one of the best English scholars and antiquarians of the last century, after making proper investigations and researches as far as he could, came to the conclusion that Sri Krishna lived at the end of the Brazen Age. "He passed a life of the most extraordinary and incomprehensible

¹ Vide I. P. Landy: *Monumental Christianity*, p. 152.

devotion. His birth was concealed from the tyrant Kamsa, to whom it had been predicted that one born at that time and in that family would destroy him, i.e. his power." Mr. Higgins further says: "In fact, the sculptures on the walls of the most ancient temples—temples by no one ever doubted to be long anterior to the Christian era, as well as written works equally old, prove, beyond the possibility of doubt, the superior antiquity of the history of Cristna to that of Jesus." Again, he refutes the arguments of his opponents against the antiquity of Cristna by saying: "Cristna, his statues, temples, and books, etc. respecting him are to be found where a Christian never came. Is it not absurd to suppose that the Brahmins could invent the story of Cristna and make it dovetail into all their other superstitions, make him an integral part of their curious Trinity, the actual Trinity of ancient Persia and of Plato, make him fit into the theological inferences of the modern Christians respecting the meaning of the first chapter of Genesis, make his story exactly agree with the orthodox massacre of the innocents, and finally make all this be received as an ancient doctrine and article of faith by millions of people, who must have known very well that it was all perfectly new to them and that they had never heard of it before".

Captain Wilford in his *Chronology of the Hindus* fixed the date of Sri Krishna and Parasara, who were contemporary to the Emperor Yudhisthira, about 1180 B.C., while the astronomer Davis, as well as Colebrooke believed that they lived as early as in 1391 B.C. Mr. W. Brennard, the author of *Hindu Astronomy*, says: "The received opinion, however, as before stated, is that Yudhisthira (with Garga and Parasara) lived some time about the 12th or the 13th century before the Christian era".

Furthermore, in the memorable and ancient Cave of Elephanta, near Bombay, a figure representing the ferocious King Kamsa (like the Herod of the Christian Bible), surrounded by slaughtered infant boys and holding a drawn sword, cannot be accounted for even by the ingenious theory of the Christian missionaries. This fact not only proves that Sri Krishna had lived centuries before Christ, but also establishes the antiquity of the whole story of His miraculous birth, His escape from the tyrant Kamsa, the infanticide by wicked King

and the other principal events of the divine life of this Saviour.

The popular belief among the orthodox Hindus is that Sri Krishna lived towards the end of *Dvapara Yuga* or the Brazen Age, and the present Iron Age, or *Kali Yuga*, began on the very day when Krishna ascended to heaven. According to this belief or tradition, He must have lived about 1391 B.C.

Although the name Krishna occurs many times in the Hymns of the Rig Veda such as in verse 23, Hymn 116, Book or Mandala I; also in verse 7, Hymn, 117, Mandala I. Oriental scholars cannot trace the identity of this Krishna and say whether he was the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. In one passage of the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, we find the name of Krishna, the son of Devaki. Again Krishna was also the inspired *Rishi* (Seer) of many Hymns (85-87 of Mandala VIII; and 42-44 of Mandala X) of the Rig Veda. From this we learn that He was contemporary to Vyasa who divided the Vedas into four parts.

The Sanskrit Grammar of Panini, who lived in the 500 B.C., mentions the name of Yudhisthira, Arjuna and Vasudeva (the son of Vasudeva) as another name of Krishna. Furthermore, in the *Mahabhashya* by Patanjali, on Panini's Sanskrit Grammar, which dates at least the second century B.C., we find convincing a proof that the story of Krishna and Kamsa was current and popular during his lifetime and that Krishna was worshipped as a God.

Prof. Bhandarkar of Bombay mentions the following allusions to Krishna in the *Mahabhashya*:

- (1) that the stories of the death of Kamsa and subjugation of Bali were popular and current in Patanjali's time;
- (2) that Krishna or Vasudeva was mentioned in the story as having killed Kamsa;
- (3) that such stories formed the subjects of dramatic representations, as Puranic stories are still popularly represented on the Hindu stage;
- (4) that the event of Kamsa's death at the hands of Krishna was in Patanjali's time believed to have occurred at a very remote time.

Another convincing proof that Krishna had been an important deity in India, long before any Christians visited the

country, we gather from the Bhitari pillar inscription, most probably of the second century A.D. which was transcribed and translated by Dr. W. H. Mill. The passage in Dr. Mills's translation reads thus: "May he who is like Krishna, still obeying his mother Devaki, after his foes are vanquished, he of golden rays with mercy protect this my design." The German antiquarian Lassen corrects it thus: "Like the conqueror of his enemies, Krishna, encircled with golden rays, who honours Devaki, may maintain his purpose."

In the *Chronology of Ancient India*, published by the University of Calcutta, however, Dr Sita Nath Pradhan places the date of the great war of Kurukshetra between 1150 B.C. and 1152 B.C. in which Sri Krishna was the charioteer of Arjuna. Now these evidences are well enough to convince the reader that Sri Krishna was a historic personage and that he lived in India centuries before the birth of Jesus the Christ.²

In His early life, Sri Krishna showed to His playmates that He was the embodiment of Divine Love in His youth, and that He was the personification of heroism, patriotism, justice and righteousness. In His maturity, He married a beautiful girl to set before the world's eye the ideal of a perfect householder; yet His non-attachment to earthly relations was so great that He witnessed the destruction of His own royal race before His passing away because His relatives and kinsmen had deviated from the path of virtue. Through all the acts of His life, whether in politics, in war, or in the duties of a householder, He emphasized and proved the truth of the grand ethical law, wherever there is virtue, there is the prospect of victory and glorious life, both in this world and hereafter; and wherever there are vice, unrighteousness, injustice, and immorality, there is destruction, physical, moral and spiritual.

² There are some controversies regarding the exact date of Sri Krishna and also of Kurukshetra War. Swami Abhedananda has only forwarded some of the opinions of some scholars.

II

KRISHNA AND CHRIST

Like Jesus of Nazareth two great Incarnations of God have been worshipped by the vast majority of mankind among different nations of the East. Each of them has been regarded by the inhabitants of the far east as the Saviour of mankind and the Redeemer of the world. These two *Avataras* or God-Incarnates in flesh and blood lived in India long before the birth of Jesus the Christ, nay, many centuries before the Hebrew prophets, who after being influenced by the Persian conception of a millennial era of earthly prosperity which was to be heralded by the coming of Sosiosh, dreamed of a coming Messiah the supernatural conquering Saviour.

Both the Saviours Krishna and Buddha were of royal descent. The one is worshipped under the name of Vasudeva, or divine Vasu, or the Krishna and the other known as Sakya Muni or Buddha. The divine Vasu or Krishna lived about 1400 B.C. and Buddha was born in the 6th century before the Christian era. Many of you, who have read the *Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold, are already familiar with the miraculous birth and life of Buddha. You have read how he was born of a virgin whose name was Maya and how the immaculate conception of the virgin Maya happened by the overshadowing of the supreme spirit, when she was praying and meditating alone in the garden adjacent to the palace of the King Shuddhodana, their newly married husband. The virgin Maya saw the holy spirit in her dream. The angels and gods came to worship the Saviour of the world before his birth and at the time of Buddha's birth celestial music filled the atmosphere. You also know that by the birth of Buddha God fulfilled the prophecy of the ancient sages, and that the whole life of Buddha was full of miracles from beginning to end, like that of Jesus the Christ of Nazareth. The ethical teachings and parables of Buddha are similar to those of Jesus the Christ. But a very few of the Western people know anything about the wonderful similarity and coincidences which exist between the

miraculous birth and child-life of Krishna and those of Christ. The idea that God incarnates in a human form to establish righteousness, to save mankind and to destroy evil, was as old among the Hindus as the Hindu religion itself.

According to the Hindu scriptures, there were seven other *Avataras* or Incarnations of God before the advent of Krishna. But the general belief is that Krishna was the consummation of all the *Avataras*, while the other Incarnations were but partial manifestations of the divinity in human form.¹ Krishna is described as the embodiment of all the divine powers, righteousness, justice, love, money and highest wisdom. There was none equal to Krishna in destroying evils and sins of the world and in subduing the wicked.

In India, Krishna is worshipped today as the highest ideal of humanity in every branch of life. He was not only the personification of the song celestial and divine love, but also the greatest hero and extremely unselfish worker that the world has ever seen. There had never been a Hindu soul in India which was not charmed and attracted by the wonderful character of this Saviour of mankind. The impression that Krishna left in the national mind of the Hindus was so strong that after the lapse of nearly four thousand years it is as fresh in the mind of the young present generation boys and girls as it was with shepherds and shepherdesses who lived and played with Krishna, the Shepherd of mankind. Waves of conquest and religious fanaticism came from the West one after another and swept away many lives and many spiritual monuments which India had produced, but the life and spiritual kingdom of the sin-atonement Krishna have remained for ages firm like the unshakable Himalayas in the midst of those waves and have withstood them all. The spiritual influence of the life and character of this ancient Saviour, Krishna was felt not only on the banks of the Ganges, but also all over India, nay, outside of India in Tibet, Persia, Asia Minor, Alexandria, and Greece.

Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador of Seleucus, came to India in the fourth century before the Christian era and lived in the court of Chandragupta. His remarks have revealed the most historical evidence regarding the worship of Krishna in

¹ *Ete chāmsha kalā pumsa Krishnastu bhagavān svāyam* — Cf. The Bhagavatam.

ancient India. He called Krishna the Indian Hercules. He said that Krishna excelled all men in strength of body and spirit and had purged the whole earth and the sea of evil, and founded many cities, and after his death divine honours were paid to him. Megasthenes mentioned the names of the cities of Mathura, where Krishna was born. Pliny called this Krisnapura or Chrysobara. Ptolemaios described Mathura as the city of the gods. Arrian said that Alexander the Great saw those cities and other kingdoms governed by the descendants of the royal family of Krishna. Thus from the remarks and accounts left by Megasthenes and Arrian it has been proved beyond doubt that the worship of Krishna as the Saviour of mankind was practised widely in India by the Hindus both before and in the time of Alexander the Great 330 years before Christ.

The similarities between the birth and death stories of Krishna and those of Christ and the coincidences of the principal events and miracles in the lives of these two Saviours are so great and startling that the Christian missionaries who entered India, as Sir William Jones writes, were astonished to find there a religion so near like their own and could only account for it by supposing that the devil foreseeing the advent of Christ, originated a system of religion in advance of his and 'Just like it'. Abbe Hue, the famous sage and one of his disciples carrying the news of their master's death, came to the spot, took care of the body and covered it with a white cloth. When the disciples were mourning and crying bitterly, the body rose from the dead, ascended into heaven in their presence, and comforted them. The body disappeared under the cover, and when they uncovered the cloth, they found pile of beautiful flowers which diffused their fragrance all around was left instead. Every Hindu believes in the second coming of Krishna at the close of the present cycle which is an ancient prophecy to be found in the sacred scriptures of the Hindus. Thus we see how strikingly similar was the miraculous birth, life, and teachings of Vasdeo, the divine Vasu, the Krishna, to those of Jesus the Christ. The Hindus have worshipped from ancient times the baby Krishna in the arms of Virgin Devaki just as the Roman catholics worship Madona with baby Christ.

The birth festival of Krishna is observed by every Hindu

about the 7th of August, as the Christmas day is observed in the West. It is extremely striking to notice that although the birthday of Jesus is observed in Christendom on the 25th of December yet, in the Catholic Calender, "The festival of the name of Jesus" stands for the 7th of August. Many scholars cannot trace the origin of this Catholic festival. Moreover it is admitted by all that 25th of December was not the birthday of Jesus. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states: "Christians count one hundred and 33 contrary opinions of different authors concerning the year the messiah appeared on earth". The ancient Egyptian church celebrated the birth and baptism on the same day. Some believed that Christ was born on the 24th or 25th of April. Other said that Christ was born on the 25th of May in the 28th year of Augustus Caesar. The greatest part of the Eastern Church kept the feast of Christ's nativity on the same day which is now called Epiphany or the 6th of January. They commemorated on the same day (1) His nativity or incarnation; (2) the appearance of the star is equal to Epiphany or manifestation to the gentiles; (3) glorious appearance at Christ's baptism, and (4) the manifestation of his divinity at Canaan. Thus when the date of Christ's birthday was left undecided, the Western Church adopted the 25th of December, the day of the ancient solar festival amongst all the Pagan nations. It is still an open question as to on what day of month and in what year Christ was born.

Next point for consideration is whether Christ was born at Nazareth or Bethlehem. Ernst Renan and other historians deny that Jesus was born at Bethlehem. Renan says, the census effected by Quirinius to which legend attributes to the journey from Bethlehem is at least 10 years later than the year in which according to Luke and Mathew, Jesus was born. Thirdly, whether Christ was born under the reign of Herod or not is a great question. According to Josephus, the census of Quirinius did not take place until after the deposition of Archalaus i.e. ten years after the death of Herod. Renan says that which proves, besides, that the journey of the family of Jesus to Bethlehem is not historical. Next question is whether Christ was the son of David. We all know how Christ's geneology according to Luke differs from that according to Mathew and how both differ from the Old Testament geneology. Renan

says that Jesus was not of the family of David. As regards Herod's decree for the slaughter of Hebrew infants, there is no historical proof in such a story. Josephus never mentions it in his history, nor the Rabbinical writers ever mentioned anything regarding such an inhuman act. Some of the impartial critics have gone so far as to trace the relation between the names connected with Jesus and those connected with the life of Krishna. There is a similarity in the name Christ and Krishna. The Chaldeans spell Chris, the Greeks Christ and the Hindus Chrisna or Krishna. Then Yadu in Sanskrit in Sanskrit Yahudah in Hebrew. Vasudev is Yusef. Manger is basket. Gokula is compared to Goshel in Egypt. In the Apocryphal Gospel of I infancy, Christ and Mary, it is said, stayed in Materea Ch: 8 "Hence they went to that Sycamore tree which is now called Mataria, some scholars think that it has some relation to Muttra. There is another point which ought to be noticed that the favourite bird of Visnu the second person of the Trinity was eagle while in the Christian Bible it is dove. Thus we can see that the life of Christ as given in the synoptic gospels is almost as extraordinary and similar as the miraculous birth and life of Krishna the Hindu Saviour of mankind, the redeemer of the world born 14 centuries before the Christian era."

Here you may ask how such similarities can be explained. The scholars vary in their opinions. But it is historical fact that the Hindus and the Buddhists came to Alexandria in about second century before the birth of Christ and interchanged their ideas with the liberal class of the Jews, known as the Essenes, many of whom were influenced by the Pythagorean school of Greece and by the asceticism of the Buddhist monks. Renan thinks that John the Baptist was influenced most probably by the Buddhist monks and he learnt from them the necessity of Baptism by immersion which was practised for ages in India and never amongst the ancient Jews. Thus after careful study and comparison we understand that both Christ and Chrisna (Krishna) have played most important parts in shaping the religions of nations and in bringing the kingdom of heaven on earth. Both of them have received the same title and born of similar worship from the vast majority of people of the East and the West. Both were the Incarnations

of God and were son of God and son of Man at the same time. As Krisna was called the Shepherd and led the life of a shepherd, so Christ was called afterwards by the same name. As Krishna said: "I am the beginning, middle, and end of the universe", so Christ said: "I am the Alpha and Omega of the air." As Krisna was pure, meek and gentle, as the Saviour of the world and protector of the poor and the oppressed, so was Christ. They were like two brothers or two manifestations of the same Divinity and two different names separated only by time and space. Whether we worship the one or the other, we should come to the same place if our worship be sincere and through love and unselfish motives.

CHAPTER I

BEGINNING OF THE DIVINE MESSAGE

The *Bhagavad Gita* is more extensively read and studied in India than the Bible in Christendom. The people study this *Gita* with greater reverence and interest than the Christians read their Bible. The *Bhagavad-Gita* has been translated into almost all European and Asiatic languages. It was first translated into English by Charles Wilkins, in 1785 in London, and again by Sir Edwin Arnold in November, 1867. Carlyle had a copy which he studied, and found great consolation. When Ralph Waldo Emerson went to visit Carlyle, he showed him his copy and gave it to him. Emerson was the first philosopher to introduce this Oriental philosophy in America. He immortalised it in his poem, called *Brahm* (i.e. Brahman), which reads as follows: "If the red slayer think that he slays, or if the slain think that he is slain, they know not well the subtle, I keep and pass, and turn again". Later on Cella Thaxter, the poetess of Appledore, mentioned this and expressed a very high opinion about the *Gita*. Later still, Mrs. Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, quoted from the *Bhagavad Gita* some passages in her earliest editions, but now these quotations have been dropped.

The correct date of the *Bhagavad-Gita* is almost unknown and is very controvertial. We do not know exactly at what time it was written. Many of the Oriental scholars think that it was written about the beginning of the Christian era and some scholars differ from it. The Hindus generally believe that it was much earlier, and was written several hundreds of years before the birth of Christ.

India has produced two great epics, the *Ramayana* (400. B.C.) and the *Mahabharata* (300 B.C.). Now they have been translated into English and different languages. Both the epics are very voluminous. The *Mahabharata* has eighteen chapters, containing about 220,000 lines and verses, while Homer's *Illiad* has twenty-four chapters, and contains only 15,693 lines.

The main theme of the epic, *Mahabharata*, is a description

of the incidents, leading to the civil war and the battle of Krurukshetra which was fought about the year 1400 B.C. The Oriental scholars hold the view that the *Mahabharata* was written about 1200 B.C. In India, the ancient historians did not care much for dates. They thought that time was nothing, they lived in eternity, and thought of the years was the passing points. Therefore, the conclusions of the far-sighted seers of Truth have no reference to exact dates like the findings of the modern historians.

The *Bhagavad-Gita*, or the *Song Celestial*, as it is called by Sir Edwin Arnold, is a dialogue between Arjuna, who was the commander-in-chief of the Pandavas in the battle of Kurukshetra, and Krishna, the great Incarnation of God, who was his charioteers (*Sarathi*) in the battle-field. Now you may think that why should Incarnation of God, who is revered and worshipped by thousands and millions, as Christ is revered in Christendom, appear in the battle-field? Some think that Krishna-worship is an imitation of Christ-worship and it was introduced in India after Christ. The Christian missionaries think that Krishna-worship first began to counteract their activity. But these are not at all the historical ones. In the history, we read that Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador, came to India and lived in the court of Chandragupta about 300 years before the birth of Christ and in his accounts we find that Krishna-worship was widely practised at that time. Krishna was described as the Indian Hercules.

Yudhisthira, by the prowess and valour of his brothers, had won the sovereignty of all India. He had a cousin whose name was Duryodhana and who bitterly envying him, designed a treacherous gambling match to which he challenged Yudhisthira. It was the custom of the warrior class at that time that when any one of the caste would challenge another, the latter was in honour bound to accept it. So when Yudhisthira was challenged, being bound by the laws of the warrior caste, he accepted the challenge, and was vanquished. Yudhisthira relinquished his kingdom, and wandered about for a long time. He was repeatedly urged by his brothers and wife, who had been subjected to all sorts of insults and indignities, to gain forcible possession of the empire, of which he had been deceitfully robbed. They had robbed him of his kingdom, and forced

him to wander for long twelve years and for one year to live incognito, but when he was urged by his brothers to take possession of his empire.

Yudhisthira was a very pious and truthful man and he never spoke anything but truth. In truth, he was as good in his life. Once he said: "Listen to my vow of truth, virtue I choose in preference to life and immortality; kingdoms and children and fame and wealth, altogether are not worth the sixteenth part of the value of truth". So after all these years and after having strictly fulfilled his vows, he returned to ask for his own share barely five villages for the maintenance of himself and his brothers, but was disdainfully refused by his enemy, Duryodhana.

Duryodhana is described as the personification of treachery and cruelty. So here are the two extremes, the good and the evil. Krishna personally went to Duryodhana and solicited him to make peace, by restoring half of the kingdom. Some people may think that when Krishna was so powerful a hero, why could he not prevent Duryodhana from fighting? I will read some extracts of his speech which he gave before Vidura. Before entering into the court of the King Duryodhana, he said: "I know the evil heart of Duryodhana, yet knowing all this I have come to the Kuru's chief today, as it is he who could save from the noose of death all this earth about to lie disolate with its men, steeds, elephants and chariots. Is there any doubt that a man who striveth with all his might for a righteous purpose, acquires merit, even though he should fail of his purpose. He who cometh not to the succour of a friend, falling into peril, the wise call him an inhuman wretch. He who preventeth a friend from an evil deed, even to the extent of seizing him by the hair, such a man is beyond all reproach" etc.

What did Duryodhana say after that? He refused to give the Pandavas even an inch of land, covered by a sword's sharp point (*suchyagra-bhumi*). So it was not Krishna's fault. He tried his best, but Duryodhana refused, and the result was the battle.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* contains the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna—the *Guru* and the disciple. Arjuna asked Krishna to put the chariot in the centre of the field, from where he could see both parties, and there he asked questions and Krishna

answered. There are eighteen chapters and seven hundred verses in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. In these verses, we find the description of various systems of spiritual *sadhana*. In the *Gita* we find first there is Karma Yoga, then Raja Yoga, then Bhakti Yoga, and then Jnana Yoga, etc. So the *Bhagavad-Gita* is a synthesis of all kinds of spiritual practice or *sadhana*. Or it can be said that the *Bhagavad-Gita* contains the essence of the Vedas and the *Upanishads*. Sri Krishna himself said that the *Gita* is the extract of the *Upanishads*, i.e. all the Upanishadic truths are contained in the *Gita*, and so its outlook or viewpoint is so literal and universal.

Now, what do we mean by *Upanishad*? It means that philosophy which describes how to obtain self-knowledge (*Atmajnana*), and so the *Upanishad* is called Vedanta. In fact, everything that Krishna said in the *Gita*, can be traced to the *Upanishads* and Vedas. Sri Krishna, the great Incarnation of God, also said that he came to fulfil and not to destroy. Such was the divine words that came out from the mouth of the present Incarnation of God, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Krishna revealed all truths of the *Upanishad* and has given life and strength to them. The *Upanishads* and the Vedas are compared to cows, the milkman is Krishna. Arjuna is the calf, and the milk is the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the drinker of that milk are the wise men. So, in every line of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, you will notice deep philosophical problems and their answers. It is itself the *Upanishad* or Vedanta.

It is very difficult to understand the *Bhagavad-Gita* without studying the Vedas, the *Upanishads*, and different systems of Hindu philosophy. For this reason various commentators explained different ideas and problems that are discussed in these lines variously. Acharya Sankara said in the introduction of his commentary on the *Gita*:

‘तदिदं गीताशास्त्रं समस्तवेदार्थसारसंग्रहभूतं दुर्विज्ञेयार्थम् । * * तस्याख्य
गीताशास्त्रस्य संक्षेपतः प्रयोजनं परं निःश्रेयसं सहेतुकस्य संसारस्य
अत्यन्तोपरमलक्षणम् ।’

The first chapter of the *Gita* is devoted to a description of the army, the various warriors and where they stood and what they did. The teachings of Krishna began with the

second chapter. The first chapter begins thus: "Sanjaya was the one who heard the discussion between Krishna and Arjuna. After the battle was over he came to the court of Dhritarashtra, the blind father of Duryadhana. The father said: "Describe the battle, how they fought from the beginning? What did the Pandavas, the five brothers, do when they assembled on the sacred plain of Kurukshetra?" Sanjaya said: "Having seen the army of the Pandavas, drawn up in battle array, Duryadhana approached his teacher, Dronacharya who was the instructor in military science of all the princes on either side. Dronacharya was the instructor in military science of all princes on either side. Dronacharya knew that Duryadhana would be defeated, yet he took the position of a General in the army of the latter, as he was supported by his court, and could not be disloyal to him. He asked Drona: "Look upon this grand army drawn up in battle array by Drupada thy talented disciple". He then described the different great heroes with diverse weapons and their skill of fighting.

The first chapter begins with the dialogues between Dhritarashtra and Sanjaya:

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच :

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सज्जय ॥

सज्जय उवाच :

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।

आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥

Arjuna thereafter took up his vow and said to Krishna, the charioteer: "Place my chariot between the two armies so that I may see with whom I must fight in this battle, I wish to observe those assembled here".

Hrishikesha (Krishna) thus addressed, drove the chariot between the two armies, and said: "O son of Pritha, look at this assembled Kurus, ready to fight". When the son of Kunti saw all the kinsmen standing, he was overcome with deepest pity, and said in sorrow: "A tremour comes over my body and my hair stands on end, the great bow slips from my hand and my skin is burning, my mind is whirling round, as it were ;

nor do I see any good from killing my kinsmen in battle, I desire no victory. Of what value is pleasure or even life itself? Those for whose sake we desire these things stand here in battle ; I do not wish to kill them even for the sake of dominion”:

पश्यतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।

व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥

* * *

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥

* * *

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥

And thus Arjuna went on saying that he was not ready to fight, his heart was overcome with pity, and his eyes were filled with tears:

दृष्ट्वैमान् स्वजनान् कृष्ण, युयुत्सून् समवस्थितान् ।

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ॥

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ।

गाण्डीवं संस्रते हस्तात् त्वक् चैव परिदह्यते ॥

Krishna said: “Whence hath this pitiful state come upon thee and why this weakness of heart?” “Yield not to unmanliness or weakness of heart, O son of Pritha, but rise and fight”.

Arjuna said: “How shall I slay in battle with arrows Bhishma and Drona, who are worthy of worship? Better indeed to live in this world upon alms than to slay those worthy of great honour”. So he dropped his bow in the charriot, and said that he would not fight. He was extremely grieved, his eyes were filled with tears, and his heart was overcome with sorrow, thinking of those on the battle-field and surveying both armies, while the weapons were beginning to be discharged:

एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः संख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।

विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविममानसः ॥ १।४७

* * *

कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणश्च मधुसूदन ।
 इषुभिः प्रतियोन्स्यामि पूजाहंवरिसूदन ॥
 गुरुनहत्वा हि महानुभावान्
 श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीहलोके ।
 हत्वाऽर्थकामास्तु गुरुनिहैव
 भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥
 न चैतद्दुविद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो
 यद्वा जयेम यदि-वा नो जयेयुः ।
 यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम—
 स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ।
 कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः
 पृच्छामि त्वां (वा त्वा) धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।
 याच्छ्रेयः स्वाभिश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
 शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ २।४-७

Sri Krishna rebuked Arjuna, the great warrior and told him to shake off all weakness:

क्लैब्यं मास्म गमः पार्थ, नैतद् त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
 क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ २।३

While he was grieving in the midst of the armies, Krishna spoke these words: "Arjuna, being of the warrior caste, was obliged to fight for a righteous cause and for justice ; he did not think of his kinsmen or relatives before coming to the battle-field ; he was very enthusiastic and did everything to organise ; he was the commander and had a large army ; but after seeing his relatives and friends and thinking of the result of the battle, he hesitated, and thought what good would come of such a fight? His heart was filled with pity and sorrow ; he became nervous and lost his head and so he wanted to retire from the battle-field at that moment. Krishna said: "No, that is not manliness". Krishna found that cause of his grief and sorrow was not right knowledge, it was attachment and ignorance, and he tried to remove the cause of his sorrow and grief and bring in the light of self-knowledge.

Another thing you must remember that when you study the *Bhagavad Gita*, you should compare the battle-field of Kuru-kshetra with this phenomenal world. There are two sides, one is virtue and the other is vice, and the individual soul (*jivatman*) is the commander-in-chief of the chariot of the body with all the armies and different forces that are working in the body, and Sri Krishna is the Divine Spirit or *Paramatman* within us. It also happens that when we are placed between the enemies in the midst of any fight, we generally feel grieved sorely and do not know what step to take and then we take advice of the divine intelligence (*buddhi*) and discriminative faculty (*viveka*), dwelling within us, and if we follow the advices of *buddhi* and *viveka* like true disciples, we gain good results, although for the time being we may be drawn by attachment of this or that. We may begin to think that it is not right and what at present seems to be wrong, must not be wrong in the end and what at present seems to be right, may be wrong in the end. We all are self-deluded men in the battle-field of this world. So, as long as we are in the charming and enchanting power of the world (*samsara*) which is no other than *maya* or nescience, we do not know which is which, just as in the dim twilight we do not know anything correctly. As for example, looking at the dead trunk of a tree we cannot distinguish whether it is a man or a trunk, so in the partial light of our knowledge, we do not know what will be the right path. So, when we come as a disciple to a wise man, we get the proper light and then we understand which is the path to righteousness. So the description of the battle in the *Bhagavad Gita* can be applied to any one, living in the world in any country at any time.

In India, the Hindus study this *Gita* not because it was given by Sri Krishna to Arjuna at the battle-field of Kuru-kshetra, but because it is helpful in their everyday life. In the path of everyday life, if we can act as Arjuna did under the instruction of Sri Krishna and if we follow and take advice of the *buddhi* or intelligence and its right direction, then we can ultimately reach the goal of all religions.

Sri Krishna said: "You have lamented for those for whom you ought not to lament and you have spoken like a wise man. Your words are like those of a wise man, but a true wise man

does not grieve ever for the departed, or for those who are separated from them”:

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे।

The cause of suffering, sorrow, misery, and all that we find in our worldly life, is to be discovered or determined first. So Sri Krishna wanted to go to the bottom of things, so that every one who was in that miserable condition, would find some remedy, and get out of the difficulties of this world. The cause of the trouble of Arjuna was that when he looked at all these different people, relatives, friends and brothers and grandfathers, the feeling of *me* and *mine* became very strong in him. And it is a fact that the centre of this world is the senses of *I*, *me*, and *mine*. But these senses would disappear, if you could withdraw yourself from those senses of *I*, *me* and *mine*. Now, whatever you call as yours, to that you become attached; whenever you go to a store you see many things, but you do not take care of those things, because you do not call them yours. So the moment you call yourself as *I* or *me*, then you care for the thing, and try to protect it, or to improve it, and when it is broken or destroyed, you grieve. So the case of this world as well as of sinful acts and wicked deeds lies in this sense of *I*, *me* and *mine*. As long as you do not understand this cause, you cannot get to the bottom and also to the root of the evil. We may try to remove the evil from the surface, but as long as the root is there, it is not removed. So Sri Krishna went to the bottom of all these grief, sorrow, suffering and misery and explained that a wise man has not the senses of *I*, *me* and *mine*. Christ said: “Whatever is thine, is mine; whatever is mine, is thine, O Lord”. All the great teachers and Saviours of the world have said the same thing. So *I*, *me* and *mine* are the means of bondage, and *thy*, *thee* and *thine* bring freedom to the soul. A wise man is one, who is not bound by any tie or attachment of any kind. As long as we have these senses of *I*, *me* and *mine*, we are not wise, and if we try to say anything with the sense of ‘*I*’, it will not be right. Imitation never brings good results. Arjuna was imitating the wise ones, but at the same time he was acting like one who was attached to the deceitful world as also to the body. The wise man looks upon all beings as the children of the Divinity, but one

who is bound by earthly desires, thinks: "This is my father, this is my brother, these are my sisters, etc."

Why dose a wise man renounce everything? Buddha and Christ renounced their mothers and everything, because they could not get freedom as long as they had that tie. So you cannot feel yourself a child of God, as long as you call yourself a child of Mr. So and so. When you are a child of God, you cannot call any one else your father or mother. When Christ was asked who was his mother, he said: "Who is my mother?" Because Christ's mother and father were God, the Almighty. Some people find fault with this expression of "My father is in Heaven". They cannot realize the real purport of this word, and so they say it was wrong. They are men of the world whose highest ideal is worldly relationship. But that is only in connection with the physical form, and when the physical form passes away, all these physical connections disappear. In truth, the soul (*jivatman*) is not the child of Mr. So and so, but is the child of God and that is difference between the feeling of a wise man and that of an ordinary man. So when Arjuna was thinking about his relatives, he was on the plain of worldliness and at the same time he was talking of virtue: all these people were going to be killed and that was not right, etc. But Sri Krishna pointed out the wrong and said: "Those who are standing before you, are not human beings, look at them as the soul (*Atman*) and the soul is immortal, you cannot kill the soul, if you have a real knowledge; you cannot kill the soul; you may say any one may go to fight and kill any one else, keeping that knowledge in mind that would not be right":

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।

न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतपरम् ॥२।१२

This is the beginning of the philosophy which Sri Krishna is going to describe. Later on he will show what other falacies Arjuna had. The cause of this worldliness is ignorance, which brings grief and self-delusion. First, the individual soul (*jivatman*) deludes itself, and then it takes upon itself these relations and ties and makes itself miserable, and then it suffers. The soul of the wise knows all of these things and does not commit itself. In fact, we are living in this world

like the silkworms. We build our own cocoons and the works. After building its cocoon, the silkworm finds itself miserable and imprisoned by that cause; it can cut it and come out of it, but it is so self-deluded that it does not know how to cut it. In the same way, we make our own cocoons in the form of families and homes, do this and that, get acquainted with so many people, call them relatives and make a world of our own, then we say: "What a pity we cannot get out of it. Who is to be blamed for the society, in which you live? If you say that your society does not allow you to read these books, or your social life does not give you time to think the higher thoughts, why do you stay in such a society, why do you content yourself under those conditions?" That question we never answer. We try to put the blame upon some one else and wish to be free, because the desire for friends is very strong in us. We do not want to take upon our shoulders anything that will make us feel bounded or enchained or encumbered in any way. We want to be free and if we can put the blame on somebody else, then we are free. Many of the religionists do the same thing. But the cause of all the misery, suffering and sorrow, instead of finding it in ourselves, we put the whole thing on the shoulders of some evil spirit, calling him devil and then we feel free, forced by an evil spirit and we cannot help it. But Vedanta philosophy does not believe in any evil spirit, because the cause is in you, and it is your own ignorance, you are suffering from your own folly; you are the cause of it; so overcome it and be like a soldier and fight it out.

Do not be weak, be strong, and shake off self-delusion or ignorance which is the cause of the misery, sorrow, and suffering. In truth, you cannot have any sorrow or suffering, you are above all these. You cannot call anything yours which belongs to you. What can enrich the soul? Does any property, position, and wealth in any form enrich the soul? No, the wise man knows this and, therefore, he sees that these things are there, but they produce no effect upon the soul. He does not say: What will people think of him. His neighbours will speak of him or her, he will be blamed by different persons, but the praise of the whole world will not enrich the soul.

The Vedas, the *Gita*, and the *Brahmasutra*, these three (*prasthanatraya*) give the foundation of Vedanta philosophy.

But when we are self-deluded, we do not know what is right or wrong, we do not know what will fulfil the highest purpose of life because our eyes are covered with ignorance and so we cannot see things straight and, consequently, we follow the masses just like sheep. The general masses are going that way. They will cough at us, if we do not follow them and that is our condition. We are like slaves. Stop for a second and think, open our eyes and perhaps we will find a better path. They are the wise ones who do not follow delusive path of the world. Leave the world to one side and go out of it, not by throwing everything aside, but by making yourselves rise above it. Wherever you go, you will have to carry your body which is the greatest impediment. You will have to have works, clothes and everything necessary to sustain yourself. Make them as simple as you can, and at the same time you live on the highest plane and do not come down to these conditions and make yourself subject to them.

The wise ones do neither grieve for the departed, nor for those separated, because they know that the space relations are only transitory, space relations do not mean anything, and space relations exist only as we are conscious of the sense plane. Do not think of this material body. Close your eyes, and you will see that you are very near, but as long as you think of the body and the limitations, you will be entangled in ignorance or nescience. So get out of ignorance or *ajnana*.

Sri Krishna said: "It is not that these great heroes did not exist in the past, nor is it true that they will not exist in future. In fact, all these great souls existed in the past, will exist in future, and all of us will exist in the same way. We are all eternal. The wise men know this and, consequently, they have no grief for any one. The immortality of the soul is the first thing that we must understand clearly":

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।

न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतपरम् ॥

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तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥२।३२-१३

CHAPTER II

MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

When the mind of Arjuna was troubled by sorrow and grief at the sight of his relatives and friends who stood before him, Sri Krishna said: "Thou hast lamented for those who do not deserve grief, and thou speakest the words of wisdom, for the wise ones do not lament those who are departed or separated".¹ In order to remove grief and sorrow from the mind of Arjuna, Sri Krishna said those words. Why did he do this? Because the cause of grief and sorrow and all sufferings that we have during our lifetime is the ignorance of our true nature. He is wise who has realized the truth, and the wise one is never sorrowful, nor miserable, nor unhappy. Because they know that ignorance or *ajnana* is the root of evil.

Arjuna was born of the warrior caste whose duty it was to fight a righteous battle, or a just fight ; that was his natural duty, and, in spite of his duty he was overcome with sorrow and grief, and deluded himself into thinking that he was going to kill his relatives, and his friends and relatives, near and dear ones, were going to be killed by him. The sense of 'I' (*aham-pratyaya*) was very strong in him, and from this sense of 'I', proceeds self-delusion (*ajnana*), and we limit or confine ourselves within a certain limit, and then get attached to things that do not really belong to us. The cause of this sorrow, as we shall see presently, is ignorance of our true self. We should not take the case of Arjuna as an individual instance, but we should take it in the general sense. In our every day life, which we are passing through and are fighting with our environments, we say that things are ours and so we are involved in grief and sorrow and also in many other unpleasant feelings. But how are we going to overcome that? We know that if we are separated from our friends, there is the sense of sorrow or suffering. When a relative dies, we suffer and this kind of suffering or

1. अशोक्यान्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे । २।११

grief is universal. And upon this foundation of grief or suffering is built the structure of this worldliness (*samsara*).

Now what do you know by *samsara*? The *samsara* means that which moves or goes on, and this movement is based upon the dual existence of pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness, etc. If we go to the very bottom of our experiences, we find grief, sorrow, and suffering everywhere, and unless we can remove that suffering we cannot enjoy absolute happiness in this life. In truth, all kinds of pleasure that proceeds from the contact of senses, is mixed with some kind of suffering or sorrow in the end, and we cannot find any absolute happiness in this world of nescience or relativity. When we get certain pleasures from some sources, either coming in contact with some external objects, or by having some good thoughts or ideals in our minds, and when we get some pleasures of happiness, we try to keep that state of mind and enjoy it constantly, and there comes what we call attachment. From attachment proceeds delusion. We delude ourselves and cannot think of anything else. Just that very thing is constantly before our minds, and when through some circumstances we happen to lose that thing, or are separated from that ideal or object, we feel unhappy and miserable. This is the way of the world. In the world, that which is evanescent and passing away, we think to be permanent. But, in truth, everything is changing constantly, and we do not think of the changes. We take some points or phases of that changeful condition and try to hold that condition and keep it with us, and after a certain time we feel that it was slipped from our hold and we have lost it. Where has it gone? It is lost forever. Then we become extremely unhappy and miserable, when we hold that thing and call it real, instead of looking at its true nature, which is evanescent ephemeral, transitory and constantly changing. If we think that it is real, permanent and eternal, that will not be wise. A wise man is he who sees things and knows things as they are. If a thing be black, we must know it as black, and not confound it with some other colour, not to let our minds commit this mistake or error of colours, then we have learnt to see things as they are. That which is real, we must realize it *per se* as real, and that which is not real, we must know it to be so and that is the first duty of a wise man. In the study of Vedanta philosophy, many

practicing the Yoga exercises. The object of studying *Gita* or practising Yoga, is to realize that which is real and to separate the reality from that which is unreal. In the daily round of our life, we go wherever we will, and we should take this with us, and make it a part of ourself and of our life. That which is real, can never change, and that which is not real, can never become permanent, if the conditions are changing, know that as such.

When you get involved in the busy worldly life, doing all kinds of duty or work, know that in these conditions, duty or work are not perfect. What you expect of them, you cannot get. So have this thought firmly fixed in your mind, then you will never be unhappy, and that is the object of Vedanta philosophy. As Sri Krishna brought to view that object in the first sentence of his teachings, he tried to show the cause of the worldliness (*samsara*), and then he told the means by which that worldliness can be got rid of.

First of all, Sri Krishna mentioned that universal condition of sorrow is to be found everywhere, and the second is the particular condition of warrior, which Arjuna was by his birthright. He was born to fight; he was a commander and was never conquered by any one during his lifetime, but was always victorious, and the greatest of all the fighters in those days, were conquered by him, and his duty was to fight, being born of the warrior caste. When he was talking to Sri Krishna regarding the true religion, and when he said that if he killed, he would commit sinful acts, all the excuses advanced by him, proceeded from cowardice and self-delusion and not from right knowledge, was the particular cause of his sorrow.

'Pandita'² is a Sanskrit word which means a 'wise one'; not one of worldly wisdom, but of wisdom that reveals the true nature of the Deity and makes us realize the ultimate truth of the universe; that is called wisdom, and he who possesses that wisdom, is called wise.³ One may be learned as a scholar, as a philosopher, or as a logician, or as a scientist, but all these

2. "गतासूनगतासंसा नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः।"

3. "पण्डिताः आमज्ञाः, पन्था आमविषया बुद्धिर्येषां ते हि पण्डिताः, 'पाण्डित्यं निविद्या' इति श्रुतेः।"

different kinds of scholars and wise men, possessing some partial knowledge, are not called wise ones, the title is given only to one who has realized the truth, who can see what is real and can separate it from what is unreal, who can distinguish between what is eternal and what is non-eternal. Sri Krishna at first said when Arjuna had said that he was not going to fight "Wherefrom have you got this sort of weakness at this time and under such circumstances"? Then Arjuna explained the cause like this. He began to speak like a wise one. He saw all the great ones were to be killed, and he did not know what would be the benefit of obtaining the victory when all the relatives would be killed. He further said that he would not like to live in this world being deprived of such relatives and friends who were standing before him. So Sri Krishna said again that his (Arjuna's) words were like those of a wise one ; he was not really wise, but talked like a wise one ; because, a wise one would never be sorrowful for one who was separated or departed. When we see that in his world our friends and relatives have departed, we naturally feel extremely miserable, we feel sorrowful and we lament them, but a wiseman does not, because he knows the true nature of the soul, living or dead, it is still existing, it can never be dead. How can he know that? By going into the state of *samadhi* or superconsciousness and separating himself from the physical conditions and the conditions of senses. If you can separate yourself and know that you are above and beyond the material conditions, then you will know that others are the same, although they are not conscious of this truth. The whole world vanishes at the time you reach the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*). The ordinary state of consciousness is related to the external conditions and sense perceptions, sensations, thoughts and ideas, and other material functions, but when we rise above thoughts and material functions, all these external sensations and feelings disappear. Where they go you do not know, and they do no longer exist, but a higher perception comes, and by that perception you can feel that which is not revealed by the senses, and then you know that your true Self, or your true nature, is at one with that which you perceive in the state of superconsciousness. That is not conditioned by the senses, nor by time and space, and at that time you become free from sorrow, pleasure,

and pain. By that experience the wise one knows that all these things exist on this plane below, and on the higher plane they do not exist, and knowing this, they do not grieve. Why should they be sorry or fearful for that which exists under certain conditions at certain times, and is not eternal. So, all this misery which we have during our ordinary state of consciousness, does not exist on the higher state of consciousness, therefore, we should not be sorrowful for them.

When a person is suffering from some kind of disease like jaundice, that person may taste candy and feel that it is bitter, but that bitterness is relative and is under a normal condition that would not be the case. When we realize certain things under certain conditions and, if one does not realize the same when the conditions change, we must know that it is not really true. If you know that this body always stays with you, no matter on what plane of consciousness you are, then it is real. So that which exists under all circumstances, is relatively true. If we remember this, and after keeping this in our minds, if we start to find out and begin to search for that which is absolutely true, then we can discover that mind, thoughts, intellect and all the feelings come and go, but there is something in us which is constant ; and that something which is constant and permanent, which does not change, is the reality. That is also the reality of the universe, because it is universal, beyond time and space, beyond limitation, and when we know that, the whole world seems to be phenomenal. All these beautiful things with varied colours and things that attract our sense, all would seem to us like dreams, because they exist under certain conditions. Colours exist as long as there is light. If you turn out the light in the room, you will not see the colour, and not only there should be light, but there should be the organ to receive the impression of the light ; then there would be a certain sensation and that, when translated by the conscious mind, would appear to be a colour. There is no such thing as colour outside of our relation to a certain object and the vibration of particles of ether which can be counted. There may be four hundred billions of vibrations in a second where there is red colour, but what is that vibration? Now, we are conscious of something which is not exactly vibration, but we call our sensation, and when we have some percept, that is what we call colour. Then

we get an abstract idea of colour and we keep that concept in our mind ; and when another similar sensation comes, we compare it with the concept in our mind. Then we find out whether it is red or yellow, black or blue or white or any other kind of impression that we may have in our mind.

The wise ones realize that all the activities of the physical body as well as of the mind, are like the activities in a dream state, because these things do not exist in reality, these activities stop when you are in the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*). They do not rise in that highest state, therefore, the wise men say that they are all evanescent.

There are four states, the conscious state, dream, dreamless sleep, and the superconscious state. Now the waking state (*jagrata-avastha*) is the first one, the dream state (*svapna-avastha*) is the second one, the dreamless sleeping state (*sushupti-avastha*) is the third one and the superconscious state is the fourth one. In fact, the superconscious state transcends the states, waking, dream, and dreamless sleep. This fourth one is known as the *turiya samadhi* state, which, in truth, is not a state at all, as it transcends the categories of time, space and causation, known as nescience (*ajnana*). In the West, three states are recognised, and they are subconscious (*avachetana*), conscious (*chetana*), and superconscious (*parachetana*). The subconscious state is the basic and one, and in Tantra, it is called the Kundalini that lies as inactive in the basic level or lotus (*muladhara*). In this basic level, hundreds and thousands of impressions (*samskaras*) of past incarnations are stored up, and so it is known as the vast field. The Yoga and Tantra philosophy admit seven levels or states of consciousness and they are *muladhara*, *svadhisthana*, *manipur*, *anahata*, *vishuddha*, *ajna* and *sahasrara*. The *sahasrara* or the thousand pettalled lotus is the seat of pure consciousness and in Tantra, it is known as the Parama-Siva, and like *turiya* it cannot truly be called as a state. In Vedanta, the teachers have also divided the states of consciousness into four and those states are known as *virata*, *hiranyagarbha*, *isvara* and *turiya*. Similarly five states of sensation or the consciousness have also been divided in Vedanta and they are known as the states or levels of *annamaya*, *manomaya*, *pranamaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya*. The real and pure consciousness (*vishuddha chaitanya*) lies above the *anandamaya* level of con-

sciousness. The *Yogavasistha* philosophy and some of the *Upanishads* admit states more than five or six or seven. In fact, the philosophers have divided consciousness into different layers or states according to their grades of manifestation and all are of the same opinion about the highest consciousness which is above nescience or time, space and causation. Sri Krishna said to Arjuna that wise or realized ones (*panditah*) are the *sthita-prajnas*, as they have gone beyond doubt and fear, but you say like the wise ones, but are not really the realized soul: *prajna-vadancha bhashase*.

That which does not change in these four states or in more other states, is permanently true. What is that thing? Sri Krishna is trying to explain that thing thus: "When you say that you are going to kill some one, you cannot kill that which is permanent ; you think you are killing but how can you kill"? Sri Krishna again said: "Do not think that I who exist now, did not exist in the past ; it is not that I did not exist in the past, nor is it true that all these kings who are standing before us did not exist in the past, nor is it true that we shall not exist in future, because we are all eternal". Here is a statement based upon deep philosophy and every word of it is filled with higher metaphysical conceptions. One thing we must remember here that what exists permanently can never change. Existence by itself, or existence '*per se*', or absolute existence, does not go through any change. Existence never becomes non-existent, and existence will continue and did continue in the past, as from the present we judge our past and future. If we exist today, it is not true that we did not exist in the past. If there be something which is constant in the midst of changes, then that something has always been constant or permanent. Why is it that we should not lament those who are standing before us? Because, all our souls are eternal; they are not material and physical forms and are not the same as flesh and blood, but they are the everlasting and eternal souls.⁴

Beginning with this stanza and including twenty more stanzas which also continued the explanation of the first state-

4. न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमं जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतःपरम् ॥

ment of Sri Krishna, such as "Thou hast lamented those who are not to be lamented.....". In these twenty-one stanzas Sri Krishna proves the existence of the soul as separate from the material body and it is eternal and immortal. First of all, as I have already mentioned, we must know the difference between eternal and non-eternal, unchangeableness and that which is changeable, and then try to find it within ourselves. When we have once found it, then if we try to think of the beginning of that something, we cannot trace any beginning, as far back as we can go in time we see it has existed. Time is a succession of thoughts and ideas and that which is permanent and unchangeable is beyond the realm of thought, consequently time does not exist in relation to it.

When we ask this question: "What is the beginning of the soul", we commit an error because the soul is beyond time and space. If we know that true nature of the soul is beyond the realm of thought, we cannot ask such a question ; but if we think of the soul as something within the realm of thought and is constantly changing, then we come to the conclusion of the materialists of the Western world that the soul was constantly changing, because they could not go beyond the realm of thought. They realized that soul is the thinking power, like thought force or intelligent force, but when they found that thought was constantly changing, they came to the conclusion that soul must be changeful.

Vedanta does not stop there, it goes beyond the realm of time, space and thought. Sri Krishna said that the soul existed before the birth of the body.⁵ From this verse we know that the soul existed before the birth of the body and will exist after its death and this is the first statement. If we know this secret,

नासनो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि मेन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

विनाशमक्यत्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्तुमर्हति ॥

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।

अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्मात् शुध्यस्व भारत ॥

5. अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः । २।१८

we will not grieve for the departed ones. That which is the true nature of the soul, is in the three stages of time, past, present and future. You may ask how do we know this? In our present life, we can see that. That which makes you feel that you are sitting here and listening to me, that made you feel yesterday what you did and the day before yesterday and up to the present day, you have never lost that sense of the force or power of something which makes you know that you are here. The conditions of your mind and body have changed, but that something which knows these different conditions is just the same. How do you know that it has changed? Because that by which you can know the change, is yourself. If you try to know the change and make any assertion that it has changed or has not changed, the knowledge through the help of which you can assert or deny is inseparable from yourself.

For instance, you did certain things ten years ago and that is in your mind in the form of memory, and you go back and think of that particular act and you can get a very vivid picture before your mind ; and when you do that, if you try to compare the condition of your mind, you will find you did it with the same senses and feeling of 'I' as you are doing the acts of today. Think of the way in which you walked this morning, you knew that you were walking, is that knowledge different from the knowledge that you have now that you are sitting? No, knowledge is the same, but the act is different. Your muscles were moving, your sense organs were active and your hearing and power of sight all were also active. But now the body is stationary, and the object of knowledge has changed partially, but the knowledge and subject are the same, and this Sri Krishna brought forth in the next verse.

Sri Krishna said: "As in this body we find the changes, the body goes through the different stages of childhood, youth and maturity, the knower, or the being, or the *Atman*, who is going through the different stages of our earthly life, is constant and the same".⁶ So when the soul, the same being, goes through the change of death, he remains the same after death. We are dying every second and every hundredth and thou-

6. देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।

तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥—गीता २।१३

sandth of a second we are changing. Death means change. The phenomenal death is the cessation of the activity of that which call vital activity. The manifestation will stop the body and the organs and the whole machinery will not move, and the manifestation of the powers will also cease.

Every seventh year we go through a thorough change in the atoms of the body. That which we experienced in our childhood, has passed away. If we say that the brain is the seat of consciousness, or of mind or of impressions, then consciousness, mind and all impressions that existed before seven years, have now changed. Then it can be asked as to how is it possible for us to remember the same thing or to bring a vivid picture of the thing which we experienced seven or ten or fifteen years ago? How can we account for the continuity of identity or sense of 'I', if it be the result of the combination of matter and force?

There are three theories that have been given by different thinkers regarding the existence of soul. The first of them is the production theory which proves that the body is the producer of the soul; the second is the combination theory which proves that the soul is the result of a combination of matter and forces and the third is the transmission theory which proves that the soul exists outside the body, but manifests through the medium of this organism. The first two are upheld mostly by the materialists, agnostics and scientists, and these two can be refuted very easily when we bring the argument that matter can never produce anything that is not matter. The sense of 'I' is not a material something and you cannot prove it. A combination of matter or material forces will never produce the sense of 'I'. If it does, you have solved the problem, but the scientists have struggled hard for centuries and may struggle forever and still they will never succeed, because the scientific truth is that motion can produce nothing but motion, and you cannot prove that consciousness, or the sense of 'I', which we have today, is a particular kind of motion. If you can prove it, then your theory will be correct, but until then you will have to believe that it is something different from motion, because it has not been proved to be the same as motion. You have no right to say that the soul is produced by the body, or by the combination of matter and forces. We must not

let you take it for granted. It is a fact that motion cannot produce anything but motion. Vibration of ether will produce vibration, or it may produce light, which is nothing but vibration. Heat, or electric current, or gravitation, or any other force of nature, is nothing but the result of motion, but consciousness, or sense of 'I', or the identity of the self, is not the same as any of these motions, but it is the knower of motions which exists in relation to this sense of 'I'. Matter and force make up half of the world. Object is one half of this universe and the other half is the subject, and you cannot deduce one from the other, and it is impossible. If you try to do it, you will fail; and if you try to deduce the object from the subject, as the idealists have done, you will also fail. Bishop Berkeley denies the existence of the external world. He thought it was nothing but ideas. But that is an old-fashioned theory. We cannot take it for granted that external conditions do not exist entirely. But this is a fact. Those external conditions, environments, and matter or forces, cannot exist independent of the subject, because an object is an object so long as it is related to the subject. You have never seen matter in itself and you have never seen it. Ask a materialist and you will see that he does not know it, and he will say that something produces this matter, and why does he not call it soul. The word 'matter' comes from the Latin word 'materies' which means the material out of which this universe is formed or designed. If you try to perceive force in itself, you cannot do it, but you can know the changes of your mind. You can know that something produces certain changes in your minds and these changes you translate into the change of matter or force, or of subject or object. But you yourself are doing all these things and no one else does these things for you, because you are the subject. First you know the changes, then you project them outside and give them a name and call it this or that. The other day I was talking to a gentleman about light, I said that light does not exist outside our mind. Light means the interpretation which we give to the vibration of certain forces, seen in the universe, and we translate it and call it light. If there be no mind to study these events and no mind to generalize and to create some abstract idea, then there would not be any light. When we study nature with our minds, or with the

powers which exist in the soul, we become conscious of different things which happen around us, but all these feelings presuppose the existence of the subject. The subject is the knower, and that is the knower of all these changes happening in our system, that we have known since our babyhood. You may say that the knower has changed with the changes of the matter, but you cannot prove it. The knower or subject never changes with the changes of the object or matter.

Now we have got to discuss the next question. We have been dead several times and have lost our identity millions of times during the period in which we have already lived. David Hume said that every night when he went to sleep, he was annihilated, every morning when he woke up, he was a different man. But we are not going to believe that. The sense of continuity is too strong in us and we cannot get rid of it so easily as that. When we leave some work half-finished before we go to bed and when we wake up, the first thing that comes to our mind is that we left the work unfinished. If we were a different person, we could not do it, and then the order of the whole world would be dead by this time, consequently, there would be a great disturbance. But our sense of 'I' is not so temporary, and, therefore, we must believe and know that this sense of something is constant, and if that something has not gone through any change during these three or more scores of years, or during the period when we live on this earth, then what proof is there that it will change after the dissolution of the body. You may say that you cannot see or feel it; it is not a question of seeing or feeling. The instrument through which the manifestation was possible, was dissolved and, therefore, you do not see the manifestation, but the power was there. You have an electric battery, or motor, to generate electricity, but if that battery be destroyed, you cannot generate it. Would you then say that it is gone, because you cannot produce it? No. The current was in the atmosphere, but that particular manifestation has stopped. There is no light which you can procure from that battery and that is the difference. This sense of identity, or continuity, is a very strong proof. If we start from it and try to trace the cause of it, we find that there must be a foundation, or something permanent which is not changeable, and that something

is what we call the true nature of the soul. The soul which passes away at death and continues to exist, is not the ultimate truth alone, but it has some phenomenal material particles and the powers of thinking, hearing smelling, etc. All these sense powers are latent and there is the predisposition, as some of the modern scientists would say that predisposition exists in the germ cells. Now we know that what we call a soul, is present not only in human beings, but in animals and vegetables also. The whole world is full of souls. Every atom has a soul. The study of micro-organisms, or germs has shown that the minutest atom living in water, not to be seen with the naked eye, has its activity. There is intelligence and power of perception trying to find expression, as well as there is to be found consciousness. Some of the modern scientists have traced that the soul exists in the roots of trees, because the roots of trees find their nourishment just as living beings and animals find it. There is some kind of conscious motion in the roots of trees and that you cannot deny. Even in the branches of trees you will find some expression of consciousness or intelligence, if you study them. The whole universe is, in fact, living, and you cannot say where the soul is and where it does not exist. There is no such thing as absolute dead matter, therefore, the Hindu philosophers say that the soul is all-pervading and uniform. There is the universal or absolute spirit which is the source of consciousness, and it manifests through various organisms. These come into existence from nature, but if nature had not this organism latent in her, where would it come from?

The combination of atoms produces some organism. There must be some kind of organism in the atoms themselves: otherwise there would not be any organism in the universe. If the organism has psychic activity, there is a predisposition that had existed before that organism took that particular form. Where would you stop? You cannot stop anywhere. Go as far back as you can, to the minutest of atoms and to the atoms of atoms, and there you will find the expression of something psychic i.e. some expression of intelligence and consciousness, and this source of consciousness or *Atman* is infinite. That which is unchangeable and real in us, is unchangeable and real in the universe. You cannot find there any difference, and the

moment you try to find the difference, you discover your errors. We have existed in the past, we do exist now, and shall exist in future, and though the material body has gone through all these changes, yet the sense of 'I' (*aham-pratyaya*) has remained permanent for the time being, and so will it continue to exist even after the dissolution of the body.

When a child is born that child manifests some powers of perception, either pleasure or pain or fear. What is the cause of this feeling or sensation? Why does the new-born baby have that perception? You may say it is transmitted from the parents, but how are these sensations, transmitted? The germ of life is, transmitted, but do the parents create the germ of life? No ; because the parents' bodies were the channels through which the germs of life have manifested in some forms, but each of these germs of life had the predisposition of forces like pleasure, pain, and feelings, and we know that predispositions can exist where there was previous existence. If we do not experience anything, at all in our life, then we cannot have that predisposition.

We know that there have been many experiments made of ducklings, hatched by chickens. When they are fully hatched, the new-born ducks would run into the water and begin to swim. Where did they get their experience and who taught them? Chickens could not. They were born with that tendency and, you call it instinct. But what is instinct? It is nothing but that store-house of impressions of previous existences. If you learn the piano, you will have to make many effort to train the nervous system and muscles and then it becomes automatic, and that state of impressions which makes you automatic, becomes also automatic. It requires a long struggle to get that instinct and also these perceptions. Previous experience means previous existence, so that a child will have experience in this life from the very beginning and it should be in harmony with the experience and impressions which it gathered in its previous existence. That is one of the proofs and conditions under which the doctrine of reincarnation is established, and that explains many of the dissimilarities which we find in the world and which can only be explained through this theory of the pre-existence of the conscious subjects. As this conscious subject came into existence with predisposition, impressions, thought force, psychic forces, sense powers and other powers manifested through the medium

of the physical form, all these things had existed before. If we do not admit this doctrine, we cannot explain the difficulties and the law of *karma* or cause and sequence would be impossible. If we came into existence for the first time on this earth and if there would be no continuity of existence after death, what would happen? That is another point. If we do certain acts and before reaping the result of these acts if we pass away, what will be the results of these acts? These acts will produce results. But where will they go and who will reap the results, if the doer be not there? All results come back to the source from which the activity proceeded. That source must be somewhere and it may not be perceptible to us, but it is there. There are many things which are not perceptible in this universe that are more important than those things which we perceive with our senses.

Sri Krishna said: "Even if these men do pass through that state of death, what difference does it make? They are dying every moment, these bodies and senses are changing, they will continue to exist, why do you then grieve?"⁷ It is only self-delusion, and you have no reason for so much lamenting and grief. So wake up and look at things as they are and do not be weak, because weakness proceeds from cowardice, self-delusion and fear. All these when combined, make one feel absolutely miserable and unhappy. When a person feels in that way, that person is not fit for any work, whether physical, mental or spiritual. Therefore wake up and realize this, and do not grieve any more. Go and find out the cause of our sorrow and weakness. Are they from the senses? Then you will realize what is absolute true and unchangeable; and when you have realized that, you have found and discovered your own error, and will be free from sorrow, suffering, misery and all the unpleasant feelings that come to human minds which are groping in the darkness of ignorance.

Truth brings the light, and wherever that light shines, all darkness of ignorance vanishes, and also all the results of that darkness of ignorance vanish instantly and the light of truth brings peace, happiness and bliss, even in this life.

⁷ The Gita, II. 18.

CHAPTER III

TRUE NATURE OF THE SOUL

The true nature of the soul does not die. It is beginningless and endless, and death of the body does not destroy the true spirit or the true nature of the soul, which is called in Sanskrit, '*Atman*'. That *Atman* is eternal. Sri Krishna said to Arjuna: "Realize that *Atman* as eternal, cease from lamenting and do not lament those who stand before you or those who are going to fall in the battle-field etc. . ." Arjuna said: "Granted that the *Atman* is eternal, still as long as we are living, we find that our souls are subject to pleasure and pain, heat and cold, and we are subject to grief also. If the *Atman* is subject to pleasure and pain, in order to avoid pain when we are suffering, what shall we do when we are sorrowful and miserable?" Sri Krishna said: "Pleasure and pain arise from the contact of senses with the objects i.e., when the senses are in contact with objects, these sensations of pleasure and pain arise; they come and go, they are impermanent, inconstant, non-eternal, knowing this endure them patiently, do not grieve."¹ When we are in this world with gross, physical forms, we are in constant touch with the environments and the external conditions. We have our sense of hearing, sense of sight, sense of smell, etc., and there are objects of senses for hearing, for sight, for smell, for odour and taste, for savour, and for touch. There is the object which produces the sense of touch, and when we are in touch with these external objects, we find that some produce pleasant sensations and others do not. We know that these external objects produce a certain kind of vibration and that it is carried from the sense organs and the nerves to the brain cells and there certain molecular changes are produced and those changes are translated by ourselves or souls into sensations, and we feel them. If we touch something with our finger, our finger does not feel the vibration. Then where is the feeling? You can-

1. मात्रास्पृशस्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥२।१४

not tell that. That vibration is not the same as feeling, but there is someone who feels and translates this sensation into feeling and then enjoys or suffers. Why does he enjoy or suffer? Because he feels either harmony or distress. When the harmony is felt, there is a feeling of pleasure, and when there is disharmony, there are pain and suffering. The same object, or condition, or sensation may produce pleasure at one time and the next moment you have, perhaps, an opposite feeling. Heat produces pain as well as pleasure. When your system is cold, in order to neutralize that condition and balance that state of cold, if heat is required, then that feeling or sensation which is produced by our contact with that heat, makes you feel that it is very harmonious, and then you enjoy it. Anything that produces distress or destroys harmony in the system, we do not like. We are under the pressure of environments, the whole universe is pressing upon us, and our life is nothing but a constant resistance to that pressure, and in trying to resist that pressure we develop a power which is called will-power. Will-power is nothing but that which resists the in-harmonious conditions, or that which we do not like, or that which does not agree with us. That is the only way by which we can develop will-power. If there be pain, there is some kind of resistance, and when we try to drive it out and limit it, that effort is the will-power. We resist it and then we develop the will-power, and if that will-power is stronger than the cause of the pain, it is overcome. This is the secret of all healing. The Christian scientists and mental healers all use this will-power, and this had been known in India centuries before Christ was born. The translation of these four verses was quoted by Mrs. Eddy in the *Science and Health*.

Those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita*, know that it contains the essence of Vedanta. The passage reads thus: "Never the spirit was born, never the spirit shall cease to be; never the spirit had the end and never had its beginning; it is birthless and deathless, and changeless remaineth the spirit forever."² And in the same chapter of the twentyfourth

2. न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिद्

नायं भूत्वाऽभविता वा न भूयः ।

edition Mrs. Eddy says: "The ancient Hindu philosophers understood something of these problems when they said in the *Celestial Song*: "It was never given for the dead, nor for the living. The soul never was not, nor all the princes of the earth, nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be, and the soul in this mortal form is immortal. One who is enlightened by this belief is not disturbed by anything that may come, etc."³ In the last edition of the book we do not find these quotations. Here we find the similarity between the fundamental principles of the Christian Science and Vedanta. The most ancient philosophers realized the true nature of the spirit that it is above pleasure and pain, heat and cold, and all other sensations and feelings. We are, in reality, above all sensations. If we can hold ourselves up on this plane, these (the sensations) may come and go and we shall not be miserable and unhappy. The wise man is one who rises above these conditions and is never disturbed by them; he endures them patiently without identifying himself with these conditions which are transient and inconstant. We know that the sudden atmospheric changes produce cold, or make us feel very warm. Under these circumstances, if we do not forget that our true nature, the *Atman*, is above all sensations and these sensations are produced by the contact of our senses with the external

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो

न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

Sankara says:

'अस्मिन् मन्त्रे षड्भावविकारा लौकिकवस्तुविक्रिया आत्मनि प्रतिषिध्यन्ते । सर्वप्रकार-
विक्रियारहित आत्मेति वाक्यार्थः ।'

Sridhara Swami says:

"तदेवं जायतेऽस्ति वर्धते विपरिणमतेऽपक्षीयते विनश्यतीत्येवं यास्कादिभिरूक्ता
षड्भावविकारा निरस्ताः ।"

Sri Krishna has also said before:

(क) अविनाशी तु तद्विद्धि * * * ; (ख) अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्त
शरीरिणः ; etc.

3. न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं नत्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।

न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥२।१२

objects, if we do not forget this, then we are not disturbed. In your every-day life when you feel that ordinary circumstances are becoming unbearable, just remember that you are above all these conditions, and they will not last forever. What is the use of suffering and taking them seriously? Know that they are impermanent and they will pass away, and then that will be the greatest consolation of your life. Then you will find the burden of your misery and suffering will be raised forever from your shoulders, and you will be happy all the time, no matter what be your circumstances, or whether you are placed in a cold or hot climate, with warm or thin garments. Then you will not mind that. I have seen persons in India, who go with the thinnest garments of cotton cloth in the coldest weather in the mountains and have so developed the power of endurance that they can live in the snow without any covering at all. Wonderful endurance I have seen, and all these conditions can be mastered by the will-power, by developing your knowledge and power of endurance, and you must learn to do that. Vedanta teaches that, but in order to do that we must not forget the philosophy of it. It is not that we are going to take it for granted that which is not true, is truth. All these sensations and feelings come and go and that by which we feel the presence of these sensations, pleasures, and pain, is permanent and is not subject to these conditions.

"If all these soldiers, relatives, and friends standing before you", said Arjuna, "give you some kind of pleasure, and if we enjoy their company, then, when we shall be deprived of their company, we shall be miserable, and suffer." In answering that question and trying to prevent Arjuna from lamenting, Sri Krishna said: "Pleasure and pain originate or arise, coming in contact with the senses and the sense objects, which are impermanent. Knowing this, rise above that feelings of pain and pleasure. You will not suffer when you are not in their company and, on the contrary, realize the eternal nature of the spirit, and that realization will help you in enjoying the absolute pleasure and happiness which do not depend upon external conditions. Happiness that proceeds from the contact of the senses with the objects is not real. It is only shadow ; it is nothing but the reflection of true happiness which is to be found in our real nature or the *Atman*. Here you will notice

that this *Atman* is not the same as the enjoyer or sufferer. Ordinarily when we say we suffer, we mean the one who suffers or enjoys. This is an ordinary understanding, especially in the Western countries, because what we call mind, or mental condition, is considered to be the real nature of the soul by the majority of people, and some people try to differentiate the ordinary mind from the higher spirit or *Atman* by calling the mind 'mortal mind' and the other 'divine mind' which does not mean anything. Mind is that which is subject to change, and when you say 'divine mind', it is no longer mind, it is something beyond mind and that should be called by some other term, but in India, we have this understanding. Very common and ordinary persons know that there is such a thing, which is the knower of the mind, and that knower is indestructible and unchangeable. Vedanta philosophy tries to make its students understand clearly the meaning of 'divine mind' and '*Atman*'. This you can only understand by practising introspection. Just sit quietly in silence for a few minutes and study the workings of your internal nature, what is going on within your mind, and you will find in studying different modifications, sensations and feelings which are coming and going, something constant and something which does not change. Gradually you will find that you are able to separate yourself from these feelings and rise above them all. If you can once separate yourself, you can never forget that you are above mind. That which is subject to modifications and feelings and sensations of change, is mind, and it is the internal organ which includes mental functions. In Raja Yoga it is called *chitta*.

The mind substance is that which lies as a medium of communication with the external world, and it is the medium between the soul and the objects of senses. When the soul tries to know the external objects, it does not have any intermediate state other than the *chitta* through which it comes in contact with something which is finer than the gross objects, and that is what we call the mind stuff of *chitta*. It is the finer matter which is subject to vibration of the higher forces, but the perceiver is not the same as the finer matter, it is different. It is higher, because it does not change. If it were subject to change, we would have called it matter, or a part of the

mind. There have been many philosophers in India who decided just in the same way as the Western philosophers have decided that the soul is the same as the mind substance with its various modifications, or changes, or faculties, or powers, with intricate feelings, cognition, volition, thought, and all these. But, in the Vedanta, we find that *jivatman* or the living soul is subject to pleasure and pain, is the doer and actor, is the sufferer and enjoyer, is the performer of all duties, is subject to change, but it is not the same as the divine immortal *Atman*, although it is inseparable from the unchangeable part. That which is higher than the mental state, is the unchangeable part. Take an illustration Here is the light, there are the globe and the chimney. The chimney may be called the *chitta*, or the subtle form, or the mind-substance, and the external globe is like the physical form with all the sense objects. But the light illumines these two. The other two have no power to produce the light, but they reflect. The light penetrates, and that light is the unchangeable part in you It is divine and immortal; it is above pleasure and pain, suffering and sorrow, and ordinary happiness, etc.

You will find this difference in Vedanta. Vedanta leads you a step beyond the ordinary idea or conception of the soul There is no other term in English by which we can express that unchangeable part in human beings. The word 'soul' is not the right word, because it is used in the sense of mind. Spirit has been used in the sense of mind or in the sense of discarnate spirits and shadowy forms and all these different ideas which people have regarding the spirit The word *Atman* or divine principle in man is the best word for it, but the latter does not convey a very definite idea. The word principle is something vague and it does not give a clear conception in our mind. Intellect is the power of understanding, and it is the principal faculty which is absolutely necessary for perception of the external objects and also for feeling suffering or pleasure or pain or fear or for knowing and cognizing sensations, etc. The understanding or intellect makes us separate individuals. I am separate from you, you are separate from me etc. Intellect differentiates us and separates us from different objects, or from ourselves, and it makes us feel different objects distinctly and separately These external and internal

changes which are produced in time and last for a few moments or seconds and then vanish, must be considered as impermanent and changeable, and they should be endured with great patience. He who endures them patiently, never grieves and never laments, and he is never sorrowful for any change of separation.

“What shall we gain by endurance of all these conditions.² If we endure, what shall be the result? Why should we endure that, and why should we not feel that we must resist pain?” Because he to whom pleasure and pain are alike, is fitted for immortality, and he is blessed and divine in this life. He who is not disturbed by these changes, is not of this earth, he is above this plane, he is above all these changeful conditions, and he lives in a realm unknown to a man of the world. All those who are living on the sense plane, cannot understand what that realm is, where his mind is, and how high he lives. But he is beyond the reach of the sun, the moon, the stars and planets, and he is above the skies. You may think that going up to the highest plane of the heaven is the limit which our souls can reach, but it is not true, as this is only the sense plane. What you perceive with the sense, does not exist when the senses are gone, but they exist in relation to the senses. If you close the eyes and the ears, you are on a different plane. Close all your senses, you are not here, but you are on the psychic plane. Close that also, you go beyond that plane. External space is not the only space that exists, but mental space is higher and covers this space, and again mental space is covered by the spiritual space, and still higher, these three spaces are there. You must not think that you are detached from and living in this spiritual plane at the time of death, but you are transported to a different plane where these things do not exist. On the psychic plane there exist other things.

Now, he who is not disturbed by external conditions, or he to whom pleasure and pain and heat and cold are the same, or he who remains tranquil endures all these changeful conditions, is fitted for immortality, because he is on the plane where death does not reach. Now, what do you mean by death? Death means a change of form, or any kind of change. Change produces dissolution. So if we can learn the nature of that which is unchangeable in the midst of all changes, then we have learnt our immortal nature and understood it; then

we no longer have any fear of death, it vanishes, and we no longer have any fear of anything. Fear proceeds from the idea of separation from friends or relatives or loss of property, or the suffering which proceeds from fear and despair. We do not consider that to be the proper idea, which brings money, or name, or fame. We think that which produces money or something which we do not possess, is a great gain. It is on the sense plane ; it is not a gain for the soul. The soul which lives from eternity to eternity is not enriched by external possessions like wealth, or property, or name or fame, or fine furniture, or this or that. You may build a large house, but what gain have you? You have satisfied some desire, that is all, but you have not really gained anything by it. You had a certain desire, you may feel the fulfilment of that to be the gain, but if you had not had that desire, you would have been better off, because you would not have had to go through all the changes that you had in order to gain that thing and possess it. He is blessed who had not that desire, because the fulfilment of that desire did not bring any real happiness and eternal peace. As long as we had a certain desire, so long we were suffering, but when that desire was gained, then we were happy. That state of mind which is not disturbed by any kind of desire, is the happiest state, and that state can be acquired, either by the fulfilment of the desire, or by discrimination (*viveka-vichara*). If you have a desire to go to a certain place, or to eat or drink something, or to do something, sit quietly and put yourself on a higher plane, place yourself upon the plane of your true nature and think that these desires are the material changes and are transient, they are coming and going and will not last long, but they will pass away. You are above that state and are perfectly happy. If you remain in that state for a few minutes, closing your eyes and concentrate your mind on your immortal nature, you will be happier than you would have been if you had gone to that place to eat or drink that thing. That happiness cannot be compared to any other condition which you can get by coming in contact with external conditions or fulfilling those desires. When you have fulfilled these desires, you will say, now I am happy, but I advise you to sit quietly and think that you have simply removed that desire. Of course, you have gained that experi-

ence, but you have lost a great deal of energy, and at the same time you have learnt something that is a gain to you. But you are not thinking of what experience you have gathered and that will not bring happiness, but the very thought that your desire is fulfilled, makes you happy. That is a state of happiness and that can be acquired easily by expending such energy. A wise man does not take that step, but he takes the opposite step and removes it by discrimination. He does not waste any energy, but he gains the same happiness you gain. He may not have the same experience, because he has had it, he knows that experience and so he does not need it, and, therefore, he is happier, and his character is exemplary.

The *Atman* is self-effulgent and self-conscious. It illumines all other things, but is not illumined by any light whatsoever. The light of the sun cannot illumine it. The sun exists in relation to you as long as you are conscious of it, but the light of the sun which illumines other objects, cannot give the knowledge of the *Atman*. The light of intelligence that makes you see the sun, or makes you feel conscious of any external object or yourself, is not caused by anything. Some people try to trace the cause of that light of intelligence into matter, or into combination of atoms and molecules. Some say that it is electricity, but electricity does not exist except in relation to our consciousness, and that idea presupposes also the light by which you know that electricity is there. How can the object of your cognition produce one who cognizes the subject? John Stuart Mill says in his *Three Essays on Religion* that when you try to see the soul in the function of the brain, it requires another mind to know that mind is another function of the brain. When you try to show that matter has produced the self-conscious something in you, you are making a great mistake. The scientists are also doing the same mistake, because their minds are on the material plane and they are studying the object constantly and do not think of the subject. That is, the great defect of the scientists is that they study the objective side and reject the subjective only just as an idealist studies the subjective side very closely, but ignores the objective one. So these are the two extremes. But we must study both the sides, objective and subjective, and then we shall find that something which is in us and cannot be

produced by the object and that something which produces sensation and brings out of the power of resistance from the subject, is not the same as the subject. It is different and we do not know what it is. We call it matter, but we have never known what matter is. Really it is that unknown something which produces sensation. It is as unknown and unknowable as the supreme Being. Atoms are not matter, but are a certain form of matter, just as the gross chair is a gross form of matter. When it is divided into indivisible particles, the difference is only of degree and not of kind. As you have not known matter when you are studying the chair, so you have not known matter when studying the molecules. It is just as unknown as at that time. Matter is eternal substance which is neither a subject, nor an object, but yet appears as a subject or an object. That eternal and effulgent something illumines the external world makes you feel that you are sitting here. But how do you know you are sitting here? You do not require any other power to make you know this, but you know it by your self-consciousness, and that self-consciousness makes you feel that you are listening and perceiving the objects before you. All these things you are knowing by that self-effulgent light or *Atman*, which is divine and transcend pleasure or pain, heat or cold, sensation and perception. That *Atman* is just as far above pleasure and pain as the sun is above the clouds. When there are clouds, we do not see the sun though the sun is much larger than the cloud itself. When you do not see the sun, what is the cause? The cloud has covered your eyesight, but no cloud can cover the sun. So, as the sun being above the clouds is large and self-effulgent and is never subject to the changes that are going on in the objects illumined by the sun, so the *Atman* is above all the changes and is never subject to the changes of the mind and the body. He who knows it, has attained to immortality and has learned the immortal nature in this life. You do not have to wait until you are in the grave, but realize the immortal nature right now, and realize here on this earth and be happy. Go anywhere you wish, and you will have no fear. If the whole world is destroyed, what difference does it make to you? You are a child of the immortal Bliss; you are always happy, and you should know that the attainment of immortality is salvation.

You have heard of salvation, and have also heard that the soul is saved. You are saved from all these troubles and feelings of pleasure, pain, suffering, and misery. In these material conditions of the world, when you have done something and are in a terrible state of worry, it should be known that it is a state of ignorance. Again when we identify ourselves with these phenomenal conditions, we make ourselves miserable and we suffer. This is really the hell. If that miserable state of the mind lasts long, as it happens with a worldly person who lives on the sense plane and if that state of mind be continued for several births, then it is the most pitiable condition. Salvation or emancipation from that state comes to one who has risen above it and is free from all these conditions. It brings here in this earth and then we realize our true self. That universal teaching is the teaching for all and that lesson is for all, not merely for Arjuna, standing on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, fourteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. It is for all of us, and so we must understand it, absorb it into our souls, and try to use it in our every-day life, and that is what the teachings of the *Gita* stand for.

Bondages of selfishness, ignorance, and self-delusion—all these come from ignorance of our immortal nature, and from not knowing that we are above these material conditions. Some people say that the soul is born of sin, its nature is sin, and, therefore, it must be saved, and that salvation cannot come except through the grace of some being. I have nothing to say against those who believe in that doctrine of grace, but if you analyze that point logically, you will find the fallacy, so it cannot be true. If the immortal nature of the soul were sinful and if you were to try to save that soul, you would kill it. If you would try to make the soul free from sin, you would kill it, because the immortal nature of a thing is inseparable from the thing itself. The innate nature of fear is to hate. So try to separate the two, fear and hate, and then you will see that you have killed the fear, and it does not exist any more. So if the innate nature of the soul is sin and if you cannot do anything good, then salvation means the annihilation of that soul, and you cannot separate it. That is one of the explanations which Vedanta philosophers give.

The innate nature of a thing, as the light of the sun or as

the light of fire is, cannot be removed from the substance without destroying the substance. So if the innate nature of the soul be subject to pain, pleasure, suffering, sin, and misery, you cannot make it free, and, therefore, there is no salvation or freedom. The soul that sinneth must die. It has already been said that death means a state of ignorance, and this state lasts until the time comes when the higher nature unfolds itself through the process of evolution. It is not necessary to have the grace of somebody, and grace does not come until the time comes. Jesus the Christ came into the world and attracted only twelve disciples, and out of them only a few attained to that state and some denied him. So, all the great teachers have drawn only a few who were ready. So you cannot force anything, but it is natural, it is subject to gradual growth and evolution, it is impossible to force, and you must have to wait.

The *Atman* or our true nature is free from all these changes and the moment you realize this truth, you are free. This freedom which you have possessed remains in you from the beginningless past or from all eternity. We had come down to this material plane, once being sons of very wealthy emperors, but we are now playing the parts of beggars, we have forgotten our wealth which we had before, and now we are feeling so miserable and unhappy, worrying about little things, but the moment we realize our immortal nature, we get back all the wealth that we had before. We had not lost that, for the time being we had forgotten it, and that state of forgetfulness is the state of worldliness or ignorance. Why have you forgotten it? Get out of this forgetfulness. As long as you are dreaming, you cannot find the cause of dream. You do not know whether it is real or not; but try to trace the cause of dream, and you will find that it is a dream and it is not the reality. But so long as you are in the dream state it appears as reality. So in this life, or in this state of mind, when we have forgotten our true nature, we need the help of an enlightened soul who will take us back and remind us of the wealth and treasures which we possess, and he becomes the saviour and gives us the news of that realm from which we have come. He is the saviour, but still you will have to save yourself, because he (the saviour) can only tell you: "There is the treasure, go and get it". If you do not get it, you will

stay here and suffer, but if you obey his order, you are the treasurer of your wealth, and if you do not obey, no one can make you prosperous, or otherwise you have not finished playing your part on this plane, the part which you are playing now. The time has not come yet, the saviour cannot force you to salvation.

That which grows or suffers is not the immortal part. The senses, mind-substance, memory, and all functions of mind, with senses-powers and which identifies itself with the gross form, are not the immortal part. That something which is the sufferer, knower and thinker, is ordinarily called ego. The ego is the chimney part of the lamp and the light part is the *Atman* and that is the immortal part in us. By going inside the chimney and feeling ourselves as one with that light, or identifying ourselves as one with the light, instead of external conditions, we will find the truth, the support of the universe and the divine principle in man, and if you can bring that consciousness into play in your every-day life, you will gain the highest happiness. You will have perfect health, and whatever you will desire, you will get, because all the desires which will rise in the wise man, will not proceed from selfish motives, but they will be pure desires and these will be fulfilled. Desires which proceed from extreme selfishness, should not be fulfilled, and if they were fulfilled, the world would go to pieces. When you desire anything, you must know what it is and whether it will be beneficial to your friends and neighbours. You must keep your soul and will in tune with the whole universe and this is the basis of morality. When you try to be moral, think of the universe, forget your little or petty self, and think of the universe and, with that thought, whatever you may do, you are moral and are spiritual. You do not have to learn the lessons of ethical culture to gain morality. Just forget yourself and feel that you are moral and perfect, and that is the simplest thing. Try to forget yourself and that is the secret for knowing your true Self. As long as you are thinking, you are *So* and so and you cannot forget yourself, but if you feel that these are the changes, coming and going and they do not belong to you and you are that immortal part above all these changes, then you have gotten beyond the reach of them and entered into the kingdom of heaven. He who wishes to enter into that state, must rise above

pleasure and pain, heat and cold, and suffering and sorrow, because all these exist on the lower planes. He who has attained to that state, has gained all knowledge and bliss, and he is in constant touch with the state of blessedness. Why is it thus? Because this is a kind of happiness which does not depend on external conditions or contact of senses or material states, but it is above and beyond, it is blissful and restful, and, therefore, it is the highest, and it does never change. If you can once realize that state in this life, then you have tested the celestial bliss here and you have entered into the kingdom of heaven, whether you go to church or not, it does not make any difference. You may hear sermons forever, but it will not do any good, until and unless you have not entered into the kingdom of heaven dwelling within you, and that is what Vedanta teaches.¹ You can do it easily and quickly instead of going through all these different ceremonials. Why do you not try it now? So try, and you will feel happier at every step and this is what the Vedanta is for. Sri Krishna, the great Incarnation of the Divine Spirit, who had lived about fourteen hundred years before Christ, gave these messages or lessons to Arjuna in the battle-field of Kurukshetra.

¹ It should be noted here that this lecture was delivered by the Swami before the American audiences

CHAPTER IV

ATMAN IS WITHOUT BEGINNING AND END

We heard why we ought to endure heat and cold, and pleasure and pain, and it is because he who can endure these duals, is fitted for immortality. There is yet another reason why we should endure these causes of sorrow, suffering, growth, and delusion that we have in our daily life. It is because they are not real: "That which is not real, has no existence and does not exist; but that which is real has eternal existence". The wise ones can draw the line between the real and unreal, pleasure and pain, suffering and sorrow. Disease and death are not real, they are unreal.¹ You may think, perhaps, that I am talking along the line of the *Christian Science*, but I cannot help it, it is Vedanta also. Last Tuesday we saw that Mrs. Eddy in her *Science and Health* quoted the translation of this very verse: "That which is real can never become non-existent and that which is unreal does not exist".² If we can show that pleasure, pain, suffering, and sorrow do not exist in reality, there would not be any difficulty in understanding why we ought not to think of them.

In the first place we must know that these sensations (of pleasure and pain, suffering and sorrow) have their begin-

¹ The lines of the *Gita* also run thus,

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्त्वास्तितिक्षत्व भारत ॥

* * *

समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥—गीता २।१४-१५

Sankara says:

‘स नित्वानित्यस्वरूपदर्शननिष्ठो द्वन्द्वसङ्घिगुणमृतत्वाय मोक्षायेत्यथः कल्पते समर्थो भवति’ । ‘धीरः’ means the wise one, or who has realized the *Atman*.

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥—गीता २।१६

ning ; they last for a few minutes or seconds, and then pass away. Some may last a longer time than others, still they come and go and they have their beginning and their end. That which has beginning and end, cannot be permanent and existent in the sense of eternal existence, as eternal existence is beginningless and endless. But all these changes which we find in the phenomenal universe have their beginning and their end, consequently they are not the same as eternal existence. Everything that is phenomenal, must be limited by time and space. This we must not forget in studying Vedanta and which is very logical and philosophical. It leads us right up to the truth and to the knower of eternal existence, and this is the first step to discrimination or Jnana Yoga. A higher discrimination is necessary in our ordinary life of every-day work, because, if we perform anything, we may do familiar acts, and in doing these we generally suffer, we reap the results of our own mistakes. Every mistake is a great teacher in the long run, but still we shall have to go through very unpleasant experience which proceeds from these mistakes.

If we study the external phenomenal world we may see different things. Everything that we perceive, must have a beginning and must have end. Take for instance, a chair, or a table. What you call a chair, or a table, is not a mere piece of wood, but some form which the wood has taken and which serves some purpose. That particular form which we call a table, is distinct from ordinary wood, or the branch of a tree. Take away the form of the table, break it into pieces, it would not be a table any longer, it would be common wood. Where has the table gone? Can you trace the end of that table? What has become of the form and where did it go? You may say it is destroyed and it has disappeared, but what has become of it? You do not know. Destroy the form of wood, it will be reduced into its elements by burning. Minute atoms and molecules will be left, and the senses would not reveal the existence of that table. As long as it has a form we call it a table, but the form we know came into existence, it might have existed in the carpenter's mind, then it was projected, it became that form and that form after destruction of the table disappeared.

In the same manner, everything that has a form, or beginning will end. This earth, for instance, has a form, and there-

fore it cannot be eternal. The sun cannot be permanent, because it has a form. So everything that you can think of, or perceive with your senses and which has a form, or which has a name, must have beginning in time and must have an end. Again when we see a chair, we look at it, but can we see the chair as something separate from its form? As long as you are conscious of a chair, you are conscious of its material cause, it is wood, or iron, or some other material.

Take an earthen pot. As long as it is a pot, you know that it is earth, or the material out of which this form has come, and you are conscious of that. The form is transitory, but the material out of which this form is made, remains for a long period of time, just as I have already explained through the form of the table, that it may be destroyed, but common wood will remain longer still, but they have their beginning and their end. So they cannot be called permanent ; they cannot be called existent in the sense of eternal existence. If that be the case, then is this world absolutely like nothing, does it exist at all, and is it absolute nothingness? If all these forms come and go, if atoms and molecules come and go, if these have their beginning and end, is there any reality in this world? That is a question! Atoms and molecules cannot be real, because they are changing every minute. If they be real, still they are changing. Here the nihilistic philosophers take their stand and say that this world is nothing, it does not exist, and absolute nothingness is the end of the world. There is a class of Buddhist philosophers who maintain that theory. They say that this world has come out of nothing and will go back to nothing ; all these things we see are like dreams, passing away like clouds, coming out and disappearing. These Buddhist philosophers are known as the Yogachara.

Do not think that the nihilistic philosophy is the result of the nineteenth century. The Buddhist philosophers concerned, lived about 600 years before the birth of Christ and they argued that way in India. But Vedanta teaches: "No, the world has not come out of nothing, nor does it go back to nothing ; there is a reality, or unchangeable reality, and that we perceive along with the chair, exists. As long as you are conscious of a chair, or are perceiving a chair or its form, you know the chair exists. You cannot separate the idea or perception of existence

from the chair, and it exists. Take away the form, destroy it, but that sense of existence or being is not destroyed. You may say it is destroyed, this chair or the form is gone, but that sense of being or existence exists in the sense of a table. You have the sense of its being or the existence of the table, or chair, or room. The form may be destroyed, but, in your perception of other things, you cannot separate this sense of existence from the sense of the form of the chair. What is this sense of existence? That is the question. Can you think of anything which you have perceived with your senses as absolutely non-existent? No, if there be a sensation of any kind, that sensation can appear to you have been felt only because of its existence. If it were absolute nothingness, there would not be that feeling of existence. The sun exists, the earth exists, stars exist, everything we see, or hear, or smell, exists, but the form changes and still that feeling or sense of existence is everywhere the same. It is not like an attribute, or a quality of a thing, like the quality of a chair, or of a table. If it were like a colour that would be one of the qualities. But existence is not like one of the attributes or qualities of a thing, because existence of the attribute, or quality, is the same as existence of the thing in itself. It is inseparable. It may be said that the reality of the world is the absolute something that underlies all these forms and names and attributes. Emanuel Kant, the great German philosopher, used to say that what he called the noumenon, is something which cannot be perceived by the senses. Yet, it is inseparable from the phenomenon which is perceptible. We perceive a thing as existent or as non-existent. Then would you say this is an abstraction? Is it so that we abstract it from a different thing and then form an idea of it? No, because it is always present in ourselves in the first place. Whenever you try to perceive an external object, first of all you will have to know that you exist and you are conscious of your own being first. Here you are conscious of your being, before you can hear or understand anything. Your sense of existence of the chair is the same as existence of your self. When you are in a room, you have a sense that you are in a room. It is existing, but that being or existence of the room is the same being as the being of yourself. Try to separate the being part and not the form part. You may have a human form, and you are not

conscious of that particular form. But as a being you are there. So the being of the universe is the same being as is represented or perceived by human beings through the senses and through different thoughts and conceptions and ideas. It is a very deep metaphysical subject, but we ought to understand it clearly. We have found that it is not a mere abstract idea or abstraction, because all abstractions depend upon yourself i.e. upon the existence of the sense of 'I'. When I am abstracting certain qualities from certain things, the result becomes abstraction or an abstract idea. But this being of the chair, or of yourself, is not an abstract idea, because every other thing, or every activity or motion depends upon the sense of being, perception, conception, and association of ideas. All these are conscious activities and you must know that they exist as dependent upon your self-existence. You may say that it is an unconscious activity, or it is an activity produced by mechanical or natural forces, but still, in order to form that conception or idea, you will have to depend upon your being, and you could not do that if you are absolutely non-existent. Start from your existence and give some interpretation of some particular kind, but that is your interpretation. It depends upon yourself and you cannot separate it from yourself, because this being has no beginning or end. Try to trace the cause of this being, but you cannot find it. Where did this idea come from? You may try forever, but will never find any beginning or end. Some people think that this being will end at the time of death. But that is not possible. Think of yourself as dead, if you can, you cannot, because your consciousness of your being is there. You may look at a dead body, but your being is there and that thought of being dead is a thought which depends upon this sense of 'I'. This sense of 'I' is a particularized form of this being. When this being appears under certain limitations like 'I am this and not that', then it becomes 'ego'. Then it differentiates one ego from another, but all these individual egos are like representatives of manifestation of this one being which is everywhere the same. This being is unchangeable, because we cannot see the change and at the same time it transcends change. The form of the chair, or the substance of the chair, or atoms and molecules of the chair may change, but the being or atoms and molecules remain the same. Here you will

notice one peculiarity in Vedanta philosophy that the subject and the object, the being of the object and the being of the subject cannot be separated. The being of the chair, that underlies and is closely connected with our perception of that chair, is inseparable and is the same as the being of ourselves, which is connected with our self-consciousness (*atma-samvid*). And if there were two, or three, or many beings, then we would have discovered the limitations. All limitations exist only in space and time, but this being is not subject to space and time. This being is our true Self, which is unchangeable and indestructible, because when we destroy the form of the body, the form is destroyed and it disappears, but the material of the body i.e. atoms and molecules of the body remain, and even when atoms and molecules are reduced to their primordial energy condition i.e. to their condition of unmanifested energy, that being is there. This being or the Self is never increased or diminished, and you cannot be able to add anything to this being. What can you add to this being which is beyond addition, subtraction, and multiplication?

The being of space is not the same as our conception of space. This eternal being cannot be described, yet it can be asked what is the particular condition of this being? But it is an undeniable fact that this being exists. Along with our perception and sensation we had this feeling that there was a being which we had in connection with these external objects and it is the same as the feeling of being which we had when we were conscious of ourselves. The one absolute being is called in Vedanta, the Brahman, or the Reality of the universe.

Brahman means 'vast expanse' (*brihatvat iti brahman*), and that means the infinite being. Wise men can understand the difference between the being which is unchangeable and the non-being which is subject to changes and has names and forms and attributes. All phenomenal things are changeable, but there is something unchangeable amidst the changes. The wise ones can separate one from the other. Ordinary people cannot separate, because they have not the finer perception of this being as the reality. They do not think of the portions, which is subject to evolution or change and which is not subject to evolution. Because ordinary men are on the sense plane, and so their minds cannot go beyond sensation, perception, and

conception. In the realm of this sense plane, their minds travel, and, consequently, they do not know or find what is the reality of the universe. Having understood this, we must know that sorrow, suffering, disease, death, etc. cannot touch the real being. Sorrow, suffering, disease, etc. are on the phenomenal plane, or on the plane of changes. You have some feeling of pain which may come from heat or cold, but heat and cold cannot touch your immortal being. It may touch your body and produce a certain sensation, may produce some feeling and you may feel either pain or sorrow, or you may enjoy, but all these do not affect the being which is your Self. Therefore, we must endure these, knowing that these do not touch or affect your true and real being.³

If we examine our material bodies, what do we find? We find that this body contains about sixty trillions of minute cells which have their own lives, and every time when we breathe air in, we draw minute particles of atoms which have life, bacteria by thousands—from fifteen thousand to forty thousand. At every breath we draw into our system food and drink, air, heat, and other elements that make up this body. When we claim this body as ours, what do we mean by it? What does this body mean, and in what sense does it belong to me? As long as I think of myself, of my being as limited by this form, so long I am one with the body; as long as I identify myself with this material form, which is nothing but the result of combination of atoms and molecules. As long as I think of this as one and identified with myself, I feel that I have the body and I am one with the body, and all the activities of the body, such as eating, drinking, suffering and seeing belong to me. If I have a pain or a pleasant sensation or discord, or disharmony in the organism, I feel pain or pleasure. A wise man never forgets that he is the conscious and all-intelligent being, and, therefore, he can endure any kind of hardship. He may be placed in the most miserable condition, but at the same time he is conscious of his being as untouched by the conditions which affect the body and produce sensations which are impermanent, inconstant. He is conscious that impressions and feelings do not stay in the true being of an individual soul. If we examine

³ आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तान्स्तितश्च स्व भारत १२।१४

the natural or external objects, we find that the form which makes us feel that the object is limited in space, is nothing. It does not exist in reality. But where it comes from, nobody can tell. What is the cause of these forms? We do not know. The form of this book is there, can you find the cause of this form? No, you see that it has length and breadth and thickness and has some colour, but when all these are separated the form disappears. All these exist in different things, but the form of the book is in this book itself. When the form is destroyed, there would not be another form exactly like this, and it will be a little different. You can see so many planes, and can see that each has a form and seems to be the same as every other plane. But that is not true, as each has peculiarity in itself and you know that a pin-head has nearly eight sextillion atoms and molecules, and they are placed at a distance which is much greater than the dimension of these atoms and, if you try to count these atoms contained in a pin-head, and if you count them by thousands per second, detaching them in your thought, or count one in a second, it will take 2,53,000 years to finish that counting in one pin-head.⁵ Can you imagine what this universe is? It is infinite in every way. The forms exist like dreams, but as long as they exist, they take their life and being from the infinite being, which is like the background of all forms and atoms and molecules.

The *Bhagvad Gita* was explained by Sri Krishna about 14,000 years before the birth of Christ. This is one of the text books of the various sects and religionists that exist in India. I am now reading from the text and its commentaries, and explaining them in English. Think of the lofty ideas of the *Gita*, which they gathered in ancient times. But it should be remembered that the teachings of the *Gita* are not new and you will find them in the Vedas older than the *Gita*. We learn the teachings of the Vedas and the *Gita* what we boast of today as the ultimate conclusions of modern science. Those teachings were explained so many thousands of years ago, but, at the same time, I must say that modern scientists have

⁴ Regarding the exact date and time of the *Gita*, there are controversies among the scholars.

⁵ Sometimes the scientists differ in their view regarding the number of years.

not succeeded in developing a religion which would be based upon those truths, and if they tried to do it, it could not be anything but Vedanta. There cannot be any other religion with name and form as a spiritual religion distinct from what we are preaching here. You may take all kinds of nonsensical ideas and put them together in the form of religion, but that would not stand in the light of science and logic. Or, if you wish to make it logical and scientific and philosophical at the same time, you would not find anything which would be religion and philosophy at the same time, as we have here.

This all-pervading, eternal, and infinite being or *Atman* cannot be destroyed by anything. No one can destroy it. Sri Krishna tries to answer the question which his disciple, Arjuna, asked him when he thought that those people who were standing in the battle-field, were going to be killed. That thought had brought grief and sorrow to his mind, and so he declined to fight. He was suffering from sorrow, grief, and delusion, but Sri Krishna said: "You cannot kill the reality of these persons, then why are you sorrowful and why do you grieve and lament? The real being of these persons, the warriors and kindred, the relatives and friends, who are standing before you, cannot be destroyed. Their real nature is indestructible, because that which is not subject to any change of any kind, cannot be destroyed.⁶ That which has no form, cannot be destroyed. You cannot destroy space and can you? No. Shall we

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वैमान् स्वजनान् कृष्ण युयुत्सून् समवस्थितान् ।

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखञ्च परिशुष्यति ॥

वैपशुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते । १।२८-२९

* * *

तस्माच्छार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् सवान्धवान् ।

स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ १।३०

* * *

एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः सङ्कल्पे रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।

विष्टुज्य सशरं चार्पं शोकसंविग्गमानसः ॥ १।३१

* * *

call this being the same as space? No. It is not the same as mental space, but the being of the space is that eternal being. That which produces space and is beyond space, is the infinite eternal being. This eternal being manifests itself through non-eternal forms or bodies, and this eternal being produces all powers and forces. You cannot think of a force as existing independent of this being. Try to think of a force as non-existing, you cannot. Try to think of a material as non-existent, you cannot. So every thought that rises in our minds, has its root in our being or the *Atman*. You yourself are the same being which is eternal, immortal, and absolute, but you are appearing through the gross form as the subtle and causal ones. A gross form is the physical form, a subtle form is the mental form, and a causal form is that energy which produces thoughts. The causal form or energy is the cause of all vibrations, and that energy rests upon this infinite being. You are the infinite being manifesting your own powers through so many different layers of manifestation and phenomenal experience. You can imagine that the sum-total of all this being is one, and out of that being is manifested all the powers and all the forms that exist in the universe through all living creatures that exist and in all plants and the intermediary stages of evolution between the plants and the human beings everywhere.

The same being, the *Atman*, is manifesting everything through all powers. We are like waves and bubbles in that ocean of reality. If you know this, do you think you will be sorrowful for any reason? No. If you lose ten or twenty or five hundred thousand dollars, do you think you have lost anything? It is simply delusion. You are thinking of yourself as a being possessing this and that. What can you lose? You

श्रीकृष्ण उवाच

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।

अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद् युध्यस्व भारत ॥—गीता २।१८

* * *

देही नित्यमवध्योऽर्थं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।

तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूताणि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥—गीता २।३०

are all-pervading, and you are everywhere. If you feel that you are sorrowful, what is there that can really affect you in this universe? If you have a pain in the body, what pain can reach you? You have no real pain. You are delighted by a little pleasure or comfort, but why should you be delighted? As you cannot subtract anything, so you cannot lose anything. Gain and loss are all changes and they do not exist in reality. They do not affect your immortal soul. With this idea, if you go out in the world, do whatever comes before you, but at the same time remember you cannot gain anything. If you have something to do, devote all your energy, fulfill all your duties. This is Karma Yoga. All the great works of the world become great by this unselfish work. Whatever comes before you, do that and spare no pains, but at the same time know that you cannot gain or lose anything⁷ Sri Krishna says: "You cannot destroy or change the reality, and you cannot add anything to the reality. You are in the battle-field ready to fight. You are here as the commander of the army, and now you are thinking you are going to kill these. Here is a work before you, go and fight, do not be a fool or a coward". Here is the work before you, but, at the same time, you cannot destroy anything. At the same time, you know you cannot lose anything or gain anything. If Arjuna had not come to the battle-field, Sri Krishna would not have advised him to fight, but he came facing the enemy and was acting like a coward; that was not the way of a hero, that was not the work of a wise man.

A wise man will perform and act where he is forced to perform and act, but, at the same time he will know that, as the unchangeable being, he is above all works and all duties; he cannot gain or lose anything; he is never sorrowful, never miserable, and pain or pleasure cannot affect him; but at the same time, as long as he is living in the world, he must abide

⁷ Similarly it has been said in the *Gita*:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्मुमी ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।—गीता २।४७-४८

Vide the *Gita*, II. 46 : "शवानर्थ उदपाने" etc. where a realized man remains contended in him forever and ever.

by the conditions of the world. His heart and soul are on the higher plane and he is conscious of the true being, but through his body and senses he performs works according to the conditions and circumstances under which he is placed. These bodies are only the instruments through which the eternal being is manifesting its powers and forces. But these instruments change, no one can help it.

As regards death of those persons standing on the battle-field, Arjuna would be well-advised not to mourn it. Like Arjuna we are also standing between our enemies and ourselves and are ready to fight with the environments. We must fight constantly and we cannot help it. When we try to earn our living, we will have to fight with so many competitors, but, at the same time, know that we are the supreme being. So we should not adopt an unfair method and do not try to cheat any one, but we will make a righteous fight according to our understanding. What will we gain by being unjust and untruthful? Rather we will be failure. So we will have to fight. If we know that we cannot gain or lose anything, then why should we be untruthful? We cannot lose anything. If all the working people followed this idea and ideal, then this world would be a heaven. But they do not know it, they cannot follow it, and so they suffer and make this earth a hell. Now, what do we mean by 'hell'? Hell is ignorance, suffering, misery, sorrow, and self-delusion. We are already in hell when we are in ignorance, and do not know ourselves. Ignorance is the cause of all these troubles. Ignorance means ignorance of our true nature that we are immortal and eternal and that we are the unchangeable being which cannot be affected by pleasure or pain, sorrow or suffering, misery or death, and which is birthless and deathless. If we are conscious of it, we have come out of that darkness of ignorance.

Knowledge is compared to sunlight, and the darkness of the night disappears when the light of Divine knowledge dawns upon the horizon of our souls and then we are wise. What is difference between a wise man and an ordinary man of the world? The wise man is not attached to anything. He is free i.e. free from attachment of all phenomenal objects of pleasure. He lives amongst friends and relatives, but knows, he has no friend in reality and is an immortal soul. He does

not fight with his relatives and friends. He does not throw them out in the street, but he has the feeling of changing the inner self into something which he is not at present. We are looking at the world through spectacles which are dark, we do not see things as they are. Put on glasses which will make us see things clearer, that is all we need. We do not have to go in search of God in the temples, or in the forests, or in the caves, because God is everywhere around us, only we cannot feel Him and search for Him. We have rather closed our eyes and are thinking that we have pain, misery, suffering, heartache and all these things. So we must rise above all these.

In the *Gita*, Sri Krishna advises his disciple to fight. It was not a command, because a fight would not have been necessary, if Arjuna were not in the battle-field. When the battle advanced, Arjuna was overpowered with grief and sorrow, and was acting like a coward in the battle-field. So Sri Krishna says: "Shake off this self-delusion when you are going to fight, because you cannot kill the reality of the universe, you cannot kill the true self of an individual, even if you try. But do your duty. Your duty at this moment is to fight, and, therefore, do it like a wise man. He who thinks that he destroys or kills another, or he who thinks he is killed or destroyed by another, both of them do not know that the soul, the self of man, can neither kill, nor be killed".⁸ In this country, we hear so much regarding immortality, whether we are immortal or not, whether immortality begins in the grave or through the

श्रीभगवानुवाच

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।

अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकर्मजुन ॥

क्लैर्व्यं मास्म गमः पार्थ नैतद् त्वय्युपपद्यते ।

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तवोतिष्ठ परन्तप ॥—गीता २।२-३

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अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद् युध्यस्व भारत ।

स एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यस्मै न मन्यते हतम् ।

उभौ तौ न विजानातो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥

—गीता २।१८-१९

mercy of Jesus the Christ, or on the Last Day of Judgement? The question of immortality never rises in India, because it is an established fact. If there be a soul, it must be immortal. God Himself cannot kill that soul. If He tries, He cannot kill Himself, because the essence of our soul is the same as the essence of the Eternal Being. So, if the Eternal Being tries to destroy Himself, He would not succeed.

It has been said: "The soul that sinneth must die" and that soul does not mean the real soul, but it means that the soul that sinneth, will remain in ignorance and will suffer death and change. It does not mean destruction or annihilation of everything. If Christ meant that, he meant something which does not exist in the world. Have you found anything absolutely annihilated or destroyed? No. It is simply a change of form. You may reduce it to atoms and forces and energy, and then you can reduce that energy into the Absolute Being, but it is not destroyed. The same substance and quantity is there and nothing is annihilated. If you say that it is destroyed, it would be meaningless. The soul that sinneth, is in ignorance and that is death.

Death means suffering, misery, and unhappiness. But the question of immortality does not arise, because it is the foundation of the individual soul. The soul of a sinner, or a criminal, is just as eternal as the Divine Being Himself, but, at the same time, the sinner must suffer, because he will reap the results of his own actions.

Suffering proceeds from our own actions and results. So, thinking of all these different points we must understand that pleasure or pain, suffering or sorrow, or sensations of heat or cold, which make us unhappy in this world, are transitory and useless. They do not exist in reality, because they are not permanent. Real existence is permanent and eternal, and it is beyond time and space. It is without beginning and end. But these sensations and feelings have an end and, therefore, are changeable. They are non-eternal and useless. A wise man can distinguish the real from the unreal. We should follow his path if we wish to enjoy perfect happiness and absolute peace in this life. The path we are following today by living a worldly life, will never make us feel that we are immortal. We may continue our struggle for existence forever,

but this life which we are leading, may last for a hundred years, and if we can make the best use of our existence, then we have gained the knowledge that will last throughout eternity. By losing the present which we are considering to be happiness by mistake, we gain infinite happiness, and therefore, a wise man chooses that path which brings happiness both here and hereafter, and choosing that path, he realizes his true Self. He remains free from the ocean of misery and enjoys the peace of life. Let us follow that and have the realization of the immortal *Atman*.

CHAPTER V

VEDANTIC CONCEPTION OF THE SOUL

From ancient times in India, there have been many theories regarding the nature and existence of the soul. In India, we find just as many theories as we find in modern Europe and America. Some people were absolutely materialistic, and they would not believe in the existence of the soul as separate from the body. They thought that the soul is born along with the birth of the material body, and continues to exist as long as the body exists, and after the death of the body, the soul is annihilated. They are known as the followers of the Charvakas, the gross materialists. The Charvakas did not believe in anything which was beyond the sense perception i.e. which cannot be perceived with our five senses. There is a class of the Buddhist philosophers who also believe in that theory. They had lived in India before the birth of Christ and that belief or theory has been very common among a certain class of people. There are other believers who say that although this material body is tangible and perishable, yet the soul is something different from the body; it comes into the body when the body is born, and when the body is dead, it disappears.

There is another class of thinkers who believe that the soul is created at the time of creation and will last until the dissolution of the world. In the meantime, it will go through different bodies, from one body into another and reap the results of the works of the previous bodies in the future bodies, and at the time of the dissolution of the world i.e. at the end of the cycle, the soul will be annihilated. There is another class of the Buddhists who believe that the soul is born and dies every second—every hundredth or millionth part of a second. It is constantly changing, as the light of flame is constantly changing. As the light which we saw, just now is gone and another flame takes its place, As in the current of the river, the water does not remain in the same spot for a millionth part of a second, but is constantly flowing, so the *Atman* is constantly

flowing. So it is a current and every particle of that current is being born and is subject to death.

The nature of the *Atman* is a matter of knowledge, but that knowledge is constantly changing and is subject to constant birth and death. There are many other theories, but all these theories are refuted in Vedanta. None of these theories is accepted by Vedanta philosophy. You must remember that in the Western countries, they do not understand difference between the true soul and the mind. Whenever we find a philosopher in the Western countries, in Europe, or in America, is going to speak about the soul, he means the psychic activity, mentality, thinking principle, or ego. He cannot go beyond that conception of the soul. The word 'soul' means mentality in the West. But in India, it is quite different. We do not consider mental activity as a part of the true nature of the soul. We include mental powers and functions under the term of mind or '*manas*'. '*Manas*' means all kinds of psychic activity, but beyond mind there is something which the Western philosophers do not know. Kant tried to know it, but he said that it is beyond human conception, beyond our mind, and cannot be described. It is there, but reason cannot establish its existence. So when Kant, the great German philosopher, could not establish its nature, we need not expect anything from other philosophers, either post-Kantian or others, because people do not go far enough.

In Vedanta, we find this difference that the true nature of the soul is something different from mental activity. It is different from the act or power of thinking. In the first place, we should remember that this body is the gross physical body. Sometimes the soul, or true nature, or what we call ego, identifies itself with this gross physical body. Generally we think of ourselves as inseparable from the material body. When we think we are sitting here, we are identifying ourselves with the bodies. There are the senses. The Hindu philosophers divide the senses into two classes, the senses of action and the sense of knowledge. The senses of action are with the hands. When we seize or hold something, or when we think of holding a book, we are identifying ourselves with the sense of handling. When we move or walk, or when we think that we are walking, we are identifying ourselves with the activity that is manifest-

ing itself through walking. The sense of knowledge is not the same as that performed with the gross physical body, but it is the activity of the nerve forces or nerve currents.

First we consider the gross physical body, then the mental activities, and then when we see something, or perceive something with our senses, or smell or taste something and that something is different from mere mental action. That is a kind of knowledge of the external world, which is called the sense perception. All these sense powers or the powers of seeing, hearing, smelling, taste, and touch are different from the five senses, or sense activities, or sense powers. When we are thinking that we are looking at anything, we identify ourselves with the act of seeing. These are the mental activities. When our senses are not working, we are not thinking of any sound, or sight, or smell, or taste, or touch, but are cogitating, or thinking, or reflecting, upon something, and that is the mental activity.

When we are making some concept, or reasoning, that is another function, and it is intellection. It is different from other functions of the mind, and beyond it there is something which cannot be explained by any other word in English, because there is no such word which will signify that something. It is, therefore, beyond reasoning, or thinking, or mental activity. In Sanskrit, that something is called the *Atman*. This *Atman* is not the same thing as the soul. Here we will notice that how far the Hindu philosophers went in their search after the Reality of the universe. As they went in search for the Reality in the objective world very deeply, so they did in the subjective world as well. One cannot stand without the other, because everything that we know, is the representation of what we call the object in our relation to the external object. The external object by itself is not known to us. We cannot know it in relation to ourselves. In trying to study the external world, we study the images or reflections of something which we can never know. But this image or reflection exists in our mind. If we try to know these things without depending upon the external conditions or objects, we will have to study our own self very closely, and here we will find that all these precepts and concepts or impressions and ideas, are reflected on the mirror of the mind or on ourselves. Our self is like a mirror

on which all these impressions and ideas are reflected and we are studying all these. Even the modern scientist like Ernest Haeckel admits that the true nature of the soul is like a mirror upon which all these sensations, perceptions, ideas and impressions are reflected, as the images are reflected upon the mirror and there we study ourselves. These reflections pass or come and go, but the mirror, the *Atman*, remains as constant.

These different *upadhis* or the motor and sensory activities, with which the *Atman* identifies itself, are called by different names. They are called the *koshas*. There are five such *koshas* or sheaths which cover the soul. These can be peeled off, one after another, until we reach the innermost part, which is the real Self or the true nature of the soul.

Another thing we will notice in Vedanta that the real nature of the self, or the true nature of the soul, is identical with the real nature of the universe. If we study the universe and try to find the reality of the universe, we will find it in ourselves, otherwise we cannot find it. None of the Western philosophers have ever learned it. Here is the unique point which Vedanta philosophy takes, and this philosophy proves the identity of the true nature of the soul with the true nature of the universe.

We learned what the true nature of the universe is and also the reality of the unchangeable and immutable something, which we call an object, or what the materialists call matter, or what the modern scientists call God, or dynamic intelligent Power, or Supreme Energy, or Cosmic Energy, and what the philosophers call the Substance, or the Noumenon, or the Divine Being, or any other thing by name which is the support of the phenomenal appearance. The phenomenal objects can be reduced into these two categories, name and form, which are connected with concepts and thoughts which we cannot think of anything without using some kind of word or language. So names are nothing but the concepts or supports of our thoughts.

First we know that we have sensation. When our senses are in direct touch or contact with an external object, we get some vibrations, and those vibrations are carried to the brain-cells through the nerves, and there certain molecular changes take place, and the ego translates that molecular vibration or activity as sensation, and then from that sensation we get a

percept, or an idea, and from that percept or idea we know that a thing is hot or cold, red or white, and then we classify and generalize it, and then we give a name, after referring it to a class, and that name is absolutely necessary, and in that name all the thinking process are included. The name is the objective side and the thought or concept is the subjective side. If we take away the names and forms, the whole universe will disappear. Even atoms and molecules have their forms, however minute they may be, but if all these names and forms are destroyed, the residue will be that imperishable something, which we call matter or energy. But if we wish to study the true nature of that unchangeable Reality of the universe, we will have to search for the soul. It is the Soul of our souls, it is not an insentient something, and it is absolutely existent, intelligent, and blissful. These three form the true nature of our soul. The soul is self-effulgent. We have not to depend upon anything else, because it illumines everything and brings it in touch with our consciousness. As the light of the sun illumines every object on which it shines, so the light of the Self or *Atman* illumines everything on which it shines. The light of the sun will not illumine the light of the soul and it will not be able to reveal that light which emanates from the true nature of the soul. On the contrary, the light of the soul will illumine the light of the sun. That by which we know the light of the sun, is the light of the soul. This is very deep, but the Reality of the universe is still more deep. God is the deepest. But while He is so, He is at the same time the nearest to us, because in Him we live and move and have our being absolutely. We cannot exist if we be separated from Him. As the Reality of the universe is indestructible, the real nature of the soul is also indestructible, because it is one and the same.

“He who thinks that this true nature of the soul kills another, or is killed by another, does not know the Reality, does not know the Truth”.¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson translated this passage in this way: “If the red slayer thinks he slays,

¹य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।

उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥—गीता २।१९

or if the slain thinks he is slain, they know not well the subtle ways. I keep and pass, and turn again"² If you think you are going to kill, or if one thinks one is going to be killed, both of them do not know the secret and there is no ground for grief, or sorrow, or misery. You are never separated from your eternal friend and can never be separated. Sri Krishna has quoted these words showing the Vedic position or conception of the true nature of the soul. These are more ancient than this *Bhagavad Gita*, and these words I have already read in the *Katha Upanishad* in connection with my lectures on the *Secret of Death*³ It is not born. It is birthless. The true nature of the soul is never born. It has neither beginning, nor destruction or annihilation. It goes unaffected through intermediate changes. That which is born, must be subject to growth, decline, decay and death. If the *Atman* is not subject to birth, it is not subject to growth. Why is it not subject to growth? Because it has no parts; it is an indivisible whole and does not take any part from outside, nor does it lose any of the parts which it has. It is indestructible like a solid mass of reality. There is no space between it and any other object of the universe. But however minute the particles of atoms may be, these are separated from one another by intervening space. That kind of separation does not exist in the true nature of the soul. It is not like a mass of atoms and molecules. It does not lose its attributes. Whatever it has now, it had from the beginningless eternity, and will have until the endless eternity. It cannot take anything from outside. It is pre-mortal. It is older than the oldest of creations, and even God cannot destroy it. You have many theories that God creates a soul and that He keeps it in a heaven and when a body is going to have a birth, he puts a soul into the body. But that theory we never had in India.

So far we have studied the *Gita*, we know that changes cannot affect the true nature of the soul, because the soul or *Atman* is birthless, everlasting, eternal, and primeval. It is

² Ralph W. Emerson, went to visit Carlyle in England, and Carlyle showed him the book, *Bhagavad Gita*. The *Gita* was translated in English by Charles Wilkins in 1785. Emerson was inspired by Carlyle and he read the *Gita* many times, and translated some *slokas* of the *Gita* into English in poem, which was known as 'Brahm'.

³ It has already been published in book form.

not destroyed if the body is destroyed. You can destroy the body, but you cannot destroy the true nature of your soul. "He who knows the true nature of the soul as indestructible, eternal and everlasting, how can he slay another, or how can he cause another to be slain?"⁴ These kinds of activity like slaying, or killing, or causing another to kill, cannot happen in one who knows the true nature of the soul. Sri Krishna has mentioned this truth as a teacher. He thinks that perhaps his disciple thought that his teacher was persuading him to kill all his enemies, but as Sri Krishna knew the true nature of the soul and could not persuade Arjuna to kill. The killing is impossible and the soul is never killed. The material body can be killed or destroyed, but the soul remains as immortal with the death of the body.⁵

Another thing we must remember that the true nature of the soul is not the doer or the actor, but it becomes the doer or the actor when it identifies itself with the activities of mind, senses and gross physical body. If the true nature of the soul does not identify itself with the thinking power, it cannot say that I am sitting here. How can the true nature of the soul, which is formless or bodiless, be in a sitting position? When the body is in a sitting position, the soul is thought to be sitting, although it never sits. It seems to you like a riddle, but it is true, because it is formless, it can never sit, and as the form of the body can exist in, and through this true self only, it is sitting. The soul appears as moving along with the body. If you go from here to France, you take your body with you and you take your soul also with you. You take your soul with you, but, at the same time, you have never perceived your soul, or any other person's soul, with your senses. Just as you breathe air. You breathe air into the lungs, which is neither yours, nor mine, but it is in the universe. But if you claim that air in your lungs is yours, would it be right? It would be a mistake, because it is not yours. You cannot buy

‘वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।

कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥—गीता २।२१

‘अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो

न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥—गीता २।२०

it, but it is in the universe. So, when you carry your soul to France, or anywhere else, you are not carrying it, the soul is also moving. Does the space which your soul occupies ever, move? Where will you move the space? So the soul is immovable. If it could move, it would be a limited something, and would have had a form. It cannot go through any of the changes that exist in connection with the motion. Here you may ask, we have heard so much of the true nature of the soul, but what proof is there that there is such a thing? It is true that we cannot perceive it with our senses, because the senses exist as dependent upon our true Self, but do you need any proof of your own existence? You are sitting here, but would you ask me what proof is there that you are sitting here? You can never ask it. Do you doubt your existence? No, you never doubt whether you are or not. All other proofs that you get through the senses, are of two kinds, firstly, the sense-perception, secondly, the inference that depends upon sense-perception. If you see at a distance some smoke, you infer there is fire, and that inference depends upon direct sense-perception. All the logical proofs depend upon these two kinds of proof. Do you need any other proofs? Still you do not doubt it and do not want any farther proof of it, because it is a self-evident-fact and you never question it. Truth itself does not need any proof for its support. The sun shines, do you need any proof? If a blind man says the sun has not risen, can you make him believe that the sun has risen? No proof will make him believe, because he has not the sense. You may let him come into the sun-shine and he will feel a kind of heat, but he will not see the sun. Would you say, because the blind man says the sun has not risen, the sun actually has not risen? No. So, if I deny to myself that I am sitting here, would that be correct? It would not be possible, because in trying to deny myself as sitting here, I would have to use the same knowledge and with the same certainty as in denying. What proof is there by my denying myself?

So all kinds of conscious activity presuppose our own existence which we do not doubt. That shows that we do not need a sense-perception to prove the existence of the true Self, nor do we need any support, or inference, or inductive reasoning for its existence, but, if we wish to know its true nature,

what it is like, we can do so by turning our inward mind upon itself. Turn your whole inner nature upon itself and you can do it, but you will require self-control and concentration. It is said in Vedanta that it can be realized by the mind which is purified from earthly desires and earthly tendencies and also by the exercise of self-control, power of concentration and meditation, and faith and devotion. These things are necessary for purifying your mind and for making it unattached to earthly objects.

First detach your mind from that to which it is attached now and turn it towards yourself. Your mind is going outside towards external objects. It is nothing but constant attachment to external objects, sense-perceptions, and pleasures, which come from the senses. We think we are very happy and perfectly certain to stay here forever and ever, but the wise man does not care for that, he does not want it, his mind is detached from these external objects, and so he puts the whole power of the mind towards his own self, learns introspection, and through that introspection, he realizes his true nature. It reveals the true nature of the soul to him. It reveals itself to one whose mind is purified in this way. That is a thing absolutely necessary for those who wish to realize the Truth, the real Self, the *Atman*, the unchangeable part of our souls. All religions try to do this, but only Vedanta includes everything and takes in all the different methods given in different religious systems and puts them in the proper places they deserve. This method of discrimination is the quickest method and at the same time, is most difficult one. Very few can attain to the highest realization through this path. The majority of people attain through devotion and meditation to the same goal. That path would be easier for those living in the world (*samsara*). Here they direct all their thoughts and ideas towards their personal God and pray to Him for all the things which they have to receive.

“This true nature of the soul which is not subject to birth and death, leaves a body and takes another, as we throw off our old garments and put on new ones”⁶ When the garments

‘वासंसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।

तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यान्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

—गीता २।२२

are old and ragged, we throw them away and put on new ones. But we do not change ourselves. So the soul, after the death of the body, puts on another body, according to its desires and tendencies. Here it has been said that the soul takes another form. The soul means the true nature plus the thinking principle, psychic activities, powers of senses, and knowledge and action. All these powers remain latent with the subtle body. There are three sheaths of the soul and they are the gross physical body, the subtle body which stays after death of the gross body, and the causal body, which is the eternal energy where remain all the forces in a latent state. The gross physical body may be destroyed, but the subtle parts remain and cling together to this true nature of the soul. This true nature of the soul is the sustainer and support of the powers and forces that are manifested through a body. It is invisible, and even the most powerful instruments cannot catch it. It is etherial, yet it remains. Our body is composed of so many millions of cells, and they have come out from one cell be the microscopic. If that is possible, why should not that one cell be the manifestation of something finer which possesses all the power manifested in the human form. It is invisible also, but is subject to change, growth, and evolution. It is what we call the living cell. It goes from one body to another and from this plane to any other plane, and it continues to exist even after death of the gross physical form. But the true nature of the soul exists there also. "It cannot be cut into pieces, it cannot be burned by fire, or moistened by water, or dried by air".¹ It is everlasting, it can go to any place, and it can never be restricted by material thing. Its progress is not obstructed by anything of the world. It easily goes through a wall, because it is not solid. There is a big space between the particles of atoms of a wall, and through that it can go. Yet the true nature of that germ which has an etherial form, exists as a disembodied soul. It has no particular form, but it can take any form it wants. "There disembodied immortal soul is invisible, unchangeable, everlasting, beyond the power of thought, and unmanifested. Knowing this, cease from grief, cease

¹ नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्रानि नैनं दहति पावकः ।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ २।२३

lamenting ; knowing this, grieve not that you are going to be killed or going to kill some one".⁸

In these verses, Sri Krishna has given the Vedantic conception of the soul. Even if you take up the arguments that the soul is born with the birth of the body, even then you have no ground for grief. If you think the soul is born with the body, then you know that the body is going to die, it will not live forever, and the soul will be destroyed. The body may last for five scores of years, but still after that it will die, and the soul is immortal. Then what is the use of grieving when the body is sure to die? One hundred years, when compared to eternity, is nothing and it is not even like a flash of lightning. Why should we go through all these troubles and miseries if we are going to die forever, and why should we not kill ourselves right now instead of being dragged through these horrible things? If eternity is blank, if the future is blank, and if the past did not exist, then the present is worthless. We do not see any pleasure in the world, there is more pain and that is what the world is. How much pleasure have you had and how much misery? The balance of the earth will be much greater. No use of so much grief and sorrow. Birth is inevitably followed by death, and also death is followed by birth. If we believe that the soul exists after death and is going to take another form, what is the use of lamenting? Let that person die and take a better form, if he can. So the cause of grief as we find it, which Arjuna had on the battlefield, is unfounded.

If you take the whole world as subject to change and continue to change forever and ever, yet the soul is not subject to change. So do not grieve. If the soul is permanent and immortal, then do not grieve, there is no ground for grief or sorrow, and there is no way to support our lamentations.⁹

* अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २।२५

* अथ चेनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥
जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।

तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २।२६।२७

In the *Gita* 8.16, 9.21 and 15.4, Sri Krishna says that knowledge of the true nature of the soul brings emancipation to the soul.

Sri Krishna says that true nature of the soul cannot be cut by swords, or pierced by any sharp instrument. It cannot be burned by fire, it cannot be moistened by water, it cannot be dried by air. It is indestructible, unchangeable, eternal, everlasting, and immortal, and that is the conception of the true nature of the soul with us, according to Vedanta.

CHAPTER VI

THE MANIFESTED AND THE UNMANIFESTED

The beginning of everything is unseen and the end is also unseen; the beginning is unmanifested and the end is unmanifested. From the unmanifested, all that we perceive with our senses, have come and again go back to that which is unmanifested. Knowing this that beginning of everything is unmanifested, it manifests in the middle, and at the end, it goes back again to the unmanifested state, we should not grieve for that which we do not see, or from which we are separated.¹

If the human bodies have come into existence suddenly from an unknown, unseen, and unmanifested state of matter and forces, and before the beginning of birth of the bodies, that particular combination did not exist, what was this body before its birth then? It was a part of the unmanifested. It is now manifested, it has taken the shape and form, and at the time of death it will go back to the unmanifested, the elements will go to their sources, and the form will disappear forever.

If we grieve for this material form, thinking it will last forever, and if we try to keep it with us forever, shall we ever succeed? No, that which has beginning, must have an end; that which has come into existence, will go back to the source from which it came. Here you will notice that this unmanifested or undifferentiated (*Avyakta*) one, as it is called, was in the beginning of the universe. The forms of the suns, moons and stars and all animate and inanimate objects of the uni-

¹अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमभ्यानि भारत ।

अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २।२८

Vide also the *Gita* 8.18-19.

Sankara says that everything in this phenomenal world is subject to cause and sequence, and this is an unavoidable chain of *maya*, and no one can escape from this chain, and so birth is followed by death and death is followed by birth, and, therefore, we should not mourn. Sankara

says: 'कार्यकारणसंघातात्मकान्यपि भूतान्युद्दिश्य शोको न युक्तः कर्तुं यतः अव्यक्तादीनि । * * को प्रलापः अदृष्ट-दृष्ट-प्रान्ति-भूतेषु भूतेष्वित्यर्थः ।'

verse, have come from the unmanifested substance or energy (*Prakriti*). That something which cannot be described by words, which cannot be imagined or even thought of and that something which the modern scientists call the substance, or energy, or reality of the universe, was undifferentiated or unmanifested, and before evolution began and after dissolution it will be undifferentiated again, but, if the beginning and the end be unmanifested, then that which is in the middle, is the same as that which was in the beginning and will be in the end. The reality does not change, but that which is subject to change or evolution, is not absolute or permanent reality.

This unmanifested and undifferentiated energy has been called the cause of the universe. In Vedanta and also in the *Bhagavad Gita*, you will notice that there is no such thing as theory of creation of something out of nothing. That theory does not exist in the Hindu philosophy. From very ancient times, even in the Vedic age, we find the idea of evolution of one undifferentiated energy which was transformed into all these various forms that exist in the universe. This theory has been accepted, and upon this theory has been built a religion which brings comfort and consolation to all scientific minds and all minds that are capable of reasoning and are not able to accept anything upon hearsay.

In the Vedas and the Upanishads, we read: This unmanifested or undifferentiated energy, or being, or substance, became manifested by going through the process of evolution, and has taken all these names and forms ; it is called such and such, and such and such form. From this unmanifested energy or substance has come out the vital energy, vital powers, intellect, senses, mind, ether and that which is gaseous, liquid, and solid. The cause of all these is that unmanifested and undifferentiated something, which is called in Sanskrit the *Prakriti* or creative Energy.²

Spinoza calls this creative energy, the Substance Kant

²“तदेदं तर्ह्यव्याकृतमासीद्, तन्नामरूपाभ्यामेव व्याक्रियत, असौनामायमिदंरूप इति ; तदिदमप्योतर्हि नामरूपाभ्यामेव व्याक्रियते, असौनामायमिदंरूप इति ; स एव इह प्रविष्ट आ नखाग्रैभ्यः ; तदेतद्रूपदतीयमस्य सर्वस्य यदयमात्मा, अनेन ह्येतद् सर्वं वेद ।”—बृहदारण्यक उपनिषद् १।४।७

calls it the unknown and unknowable Thing-in-itself. This energy is described to be the cause of mind and matter. In the primordial state, the subject and the object and all the forces in the nature have been transformed into heat, light, electricity, motion, and gravitation etc. All these are interchangeable i.e. changeable one into another. It shows that all these various forces of the nature are nothing but so many expressions of one primordial force or energy.

Another idea is very common amongst the Hindu philosophers. They hold that effect lies in the cause. As for example, we see an effect, something made of clay i.e. an earthen pot. Now this pot exists in the earth, or in the clay, otherwise you cannot make it. The tree lies in the seed potentially. If the tree be the effect and seed be the cause, then the tree lies in the seed. The effect lies in the cause, and it can be proved very easily that it is so. If the human form is the effect, then that effect lies in the seed i.e. in the cause, and if the sun, the moon, and the stars, and all different planets, whether they are organic or inorganic, be the effect, then they existed in the potential form in the undifferentiated state. The process of evolution brings out that potentiality into creative energy, just as environments would bring out the tree that lies potentially in the seed, but environments cannot add one iota to the potentiality that lies in the seed.

Some of the modern scientists think that environments create the object, but, in fact, the environments do not create, but help the growth of the potential power in struggling to manifest itself into some creative form. That is the thing which we learn from the *Gita*, though Sri Krishna puts in a different way,

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।

तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

“Birth is followed by death and vice versa, and so manifestation is only temporary, and if that manifestation be pleasant or unpleasant, shall we grieve for it, or lament for it, or shall we feel happy and comfortable and be pleased on account of that temporary effect which it produces upon ourselves? We may do so, but the wise ones will take things as they exist permanently. They consider those things to be true which

do not change, and that which is subject to change, cannot be relied upon. So, when we think of our friends and relatives, if they are going to die, we consider that they are the combination of the effects of matter and causes. Because it has come into existence, and, therefore, it must go through this process and ultimately end in that unmanifested or undifferentiated form.

We have seen that, considering the true nature of the soul, which is permanent, unchangeable, eternal, and immortal, we ought not to grieve it. We ought not grieve for our friends and relatives who are going to die. If we think of the body, we see that birth is followed by death and death by birth again, so we need not fear or lament.

If we think of the body as a combination of matter and force, we should not be sorrowful, because we have come from the undifferentiated and are going back to that. Then where is the cause for sorrow, pain and misery or suffering? From this the wise ones try to decide that this world is a delusion of the mind.³ The world which we see and is represented to our mind or senses, is only temporary and does not last forever. So what is the use of taking this temporary something for that which is eternal. We cannot make it eternal. The whole universe is subject to change, and our bodies are nothing but the eddies in the ocean of matter. The particles of matter are coming in and going out of the body. Every time we eat or drink and add so much to the system and when we throw it out, we throw off our imperfections and unnecessary particles. So as long as we live, we are doing this and it means a constant change.

The wise ones think of this constant change of everything phenomenal and try to see that which does not change, is real. That which does not change, is our true Self, the *Atman*. In the midst of these changes, to find the unchangeable and at the same time essential thing in the world is most difficult. But still all the best thinkers, all scientists, all philosophers, and all religionists, are struggling hard from time immemorial to realize it. Our life would not be worth-living

³ Sankara also says: चराचरं भाति मनोविलासम्.

i.e. the whole world-appearance is no other than mind-construction, and so it *appears* as delusion or *maya*.

if our struggles cease at this moment. What shall we work for, why should we live in this world in this way, and why should we go through all these changes and sufferings, if there be no particle of truth, no reality, and no unchangeable something, upon which we can lay our hands? Why should we live the life of a worldly or business man, or a politician, if this life be only for a short period? We should not do it. But the greatest ideal of our life should be to know that something which is beyond all changes, and which is our true Self.

What the scientists try to put before our minds as the unchangeable truth, is called in Vedanta *tattvamasī* i.e. thou art that Reality, inseparable and one with the Self. The Reality is that true Self". "He who sees this Reality, perceives it, and realizes it, as a wonder, and others, hearing a great deal of it, cannot realize it".⁴ This *Atman*, this true Self, is a wonderful thing. It is the oldest of the old, yet it is new. It appears to be subject to change, grief, and sorrow, but it is not so.

When you come to know your true nature, you will find that which seems subject to birth and death, grief and sorrow, misery and change, is beyond all these; it is perfect and, therefore, it is a wonderful thing. What can be more wonderful than that which appears to be different from that which it is in reality? That true Self appears to be like something material. That true Self appears to be one and inseparable from the body, but yet, when we come to know it and realize it ourselves, we find it is not one with the body, it is entirely different, and is separate from the material body.

At present, we think that we are subject to sorrow, misery, anxiety, worry, but when we come to realize our true Self, we will find it is the abode of eternal happiness. It is not subject to change, yet it appears to be changeful. It is eternal, yet it appears to be non-eternal and subject to birth and death. It illumines everything, but yet it appears to be illumined by

⁴ आश्चर्यवद् पश्यति कश्चिदेनमाश्चर्यवद् वदति तथैव चान्यः ।

आश्चर्यवच्चैवमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चिद् ॥

—गीता २।२९

'The *Katha Upanishad* also says, श्रवणायामपि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः'

(कठ उ० १।२।७)

the light of the sun, or by earthly light, etc., but, in reality, it is the illuminator of the light of the sun, moon, and earthly lights.

The *Atman* appears to be different from the Supreme Being, but it is the Absolute Reality. It is the same as the Reality of the universe. It appears to be separate from the Divinity as a mortal something, but, in reality, it is divine. What can be more wonderful than this ? It appears at present to be bound by ties of *maya*, but, in reality, it is absolutely free from material bondages, or from material ties of passion and attachment. It is one, yet it appears to be differentiated or divided, as it were.

In this way, when one realizes the true nature of the Self, he finds it wonderful. What he thought at first about it, becomes untrue, and that is the cause of wonder. He whose mind is purified, who has gained control over senses and mind and has overcome this world, does not seek the pleasures and comforts and luxuries of this world and whose mind has outgrown all these things, having outgrown everything and whose mind is dissatisfied, is a soul ready for such realization.

Those who are still trying to enjoy themselves with all these things, are not ready yet. They will be ready in time, but they need experiences yet. Wonderful is the person who realizes the true nature of the Self, and wonderful is the speaker, because, after realizing it once, they become silent. Why? Because whom would we speak to ? We do not see any one separate from ourselves, and so we are above the material plane, the mental plane, and also above the plane of ego. Still we perform all our tasks, as if led by the results of the actions of our previous incarnations. Our present life is the resultant of our past. Whatever impression and ideas we have in this life, are nothing but the result of the actions which we performed in our previous life. The wise ones perform acts, not with selfish motives and not with desires for gaining anything or satisfying any selfish purpose. He does not work for gain, not for riches, and not for name or fame, but sometimes, when he does anything, he does it for the good of humanity, and when he speaks at all, he speaks only for the good of humanity. But every one does not hear him. They are very few, who listen to such a speaker, because others would not feel interested. Others would like to have something which

they can grasp. There are very few whose minds have become dissatisfied with the transitory and ephemeral character of this world and who are struggling for the realization of that which is permanent, eternal, unchangeable, and one, and who have gone through all the various things that prevent ordinary minds from realizing the Truth. Such souls would appreciate what is said to them by the wise ones, who have realized the true Self. Others will listen, but, after hearing over and over again, will not be able to grasp what is meant by this unchangeable reality of the soul.⁵

It is said in the *Gita*: "Only one amongst thousands struggles for perfection and, amongst thousands who do struggle, very few can attain the truth. Others are not yet ready".⁶ But do we say that those who are not ready, will never attain it? No, they will attain it in time. They may not attain it in this life, but they will attain it later, perhaps after several births, or perhaps, in the next incarnation. Until they have learned the transitoriness and delusive nature of this world, their minds will not struggle for the unknown and unknowable Truth.

There are many obstacles that prevent ordinary persons from struggling to realize the unchangeable truth. There are many desires, attachment to the world and the body, and clinging to life, etc. We do not want to give up what we possess at present, but we want to keep it up forever. Clinging to the pleasures of our present life, we cannot rise high above the plane of attachment. The whole world is tied down by that minute thread of egoism or the sense of 'I', 'me' and 'mine' and there you have the sense of worldliness (*samsara*). Do not think of yourself as Mr. and Mrs. So and so; do not think of yourself as possessing this or that, then you will see that your worldliness⁷ has vanished. That is the reason why Jesus said: "Whatever is mine, is thine; whatever is thine, is mine." He said that for himself, so that others could follow the same.

"When we cease to be wicked, we rise above the plane of relativity. When we have succeeded in cutting off the thread

⁵ Vide the *Gita* II. 29.

⁶ मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चित् यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्तुतः ॥७३॥

⁷ Worldliness comes from desires and attachments to material things.

of attachment, we speak for that which is eternal, unchangeable, and true." And, at that time, if we meet such a wise one who has realized it and is willing to say something about it, we appreciate that wonderful teacher, and by following his path, we attain to the highest goal. That illumined soul is indestructible, though dwells in the bodies, and, therefore, we must not grieve or be sorrowful for the loss or death of the bodies.

Here you will notice that even the embodied soul is indestructible. We have heard of the true nature of the *Atman*, but when we hear of the actor, which performs and thinks, we think that is indestructible, as that exists after death of the body. That is the true nature of the soul, together with the subtle body or mind substance which contains all the powers and ideas which we have. It contains also the infinite potentialities and innumerable unmanifested infinite powers.

Some power is manifested at this time and other powers will be manifested later on. You are not the same person today that you were twenty years ago. You have developed and unfolded yourself so much. So many persons have been manifested in you. Can you say that you will remain the same person twenty years hence? No; you will change entirely. Every seventh year we change every particle and atom we have in the body. The brain-cells also change, and the mind substance is constantly subject to change. So this potential or essential body, which is the cause of this gross physical body, will reap the results of its work from one birth into another and continue to exist until the highest truth is realized, or the perfection is reached. The goal of all religions is attained after realization.

So we have learned two things, the *Atman* or the Divine Principle in us, and the *jivatman*, the embodied soul which is the ego. We must never think that we are really bound by mind, intellect, ideas, and impressions as we are at present. But that which is beyond all these ideas and impressions, is in us. They are inseparable from the ego, or the ego is inseparable from them. The ego is changeable, but, at the same time, it cannot exist being separate from the divine immortal part which is within us. The ego can be called 'soul', and the Soul of our souls is the *Atman* which is the true nature. We have learned it from the verse I have already explained.

Sri Krishna said to his disciple, Arjuna, that knowing this,

he ought not to grieve or lament, that all those people who were standing before him on the battle-field, ready to fight, were not subject to death. We consider that true nature of the embodied soul is immortal and indestructible and the physical forms are subject to birth and death, so where is the cause for grief? Sri Krishna goes on to show that being a Kshatriya of the warrior caste, his duty was to fight, and he was born to fight, according to his caste. If he could die fighting a righteous battle, there could not be anything better for him. So Sri Krishna says that now from the warrior standpoint he ought to fight and perform his duty.⁸

You must not take it here as the duty of only a particular person, belonging to some particular caste. If you are bound by any duty, do it and you are bound to do it. You must take it in a general sense. This fighting is a supreme duty ; it is not opposed today, since it is conducive to the popular well-being. Why should the battle be fought ? A Kshatriya finds such a battle an open door to heaven. There was a belief that if a Kshatriya fell in the battle-field without showing his back to the enemy, he would go to heaven, and that belief amongst the people of the warrior caste has made them the most loyal fighters that have ever been seen. They will never show their back to the enemy ; they will gladly die in the battle-field with the belief that it was the best thing for them to do. I think, that should be the belief of all warriors, because without that kind of conviction or faith, no one can perform his duty according to the best of his ability. "If thou shalt not fight this battle, thou shalt incur sin and shalt be punished for it". To one who has been esteemed so highly in infamy, is worse than death. Arjuna was one of the best warriors, and was in grief at the last moment, when the battle had begun, could there be anything more lamentable than that sympathy which forced him to take that attitude ? "The great warriors will not understand that

* देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।

तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूताणि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥२।३०-३१

you have withdrawn from the battle-field through real sympathy and compassion, what is more painful than that ? Killed thou shalt reach heaven, victorious thou shalt enjoy the earth".⁹

The Hindus believe there are many heavens, different planes of existence where people go to reap the results of their work ; a Kshatriya will go to a certain heaven where they will enjoy certain pleasures. This heavenly life is not eternal, but is, just like this earthly existence, only with this difference that in heavenly life the people have the pleasures without the pains and suffering. "If killed, thou shalt reach heaven, and victorious thou shalt enjoy the earth". "Therefore, son of Kunti, rise and fight ; alike pleasure and pain, success and defeat, prepare for the battle, and thus thou shalt not incur sin. Treating alike pleasure and pain, without liking one or deserving the other, let us try to understand it clearly. What is meant by fighting without seeking the results, without liking pleasure or disliking pain, without considering all that?"¹⁰

"If you can fight or perform your duty without thinking of the gain or loss, pleasure or pain, success or defeat, through

⁹ यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।

सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥

अथ चेत् त्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।

ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिञ्च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

अकीर्तिञ्चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।

सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥

भयाद् रणादुपरतं संस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।

येषां च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।

निन्दन्तस्तत्र सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥२।३२-३६

¹⁰ हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्षसे महीम् ।

तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥

सुखेदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैव पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥२।३७-३८

that work, shall attain the highest goal".¹¹ Here comes Karma Yoga, the secret and philosophy of work. This is a great lesson to learn. As long as we live in the world, the world is the battle-field and we are fighting in it. Sometimes our minds are overcome with grief and sorrow at the sight of some misery or pain or suffering which may come to us through some work, or while trying to perform some duty. But, under those circumstances, the best way is not to think of the results while doing our duties. Let us perform our works without seeking or thinking of the results, doing just work for work's sake. How can we do this?¹²

It is the most difficult thing to work without asking results in the world, because the incentive for work is to gain the results that will come through the work. We must not keep our mind on the results and that is the way to escape from the binding of the world. Ordinarily, we perform the functions of our body and mind, but here comes the instruction that we must work without thinking of the results. First of all, there ought to be some motive and that motive means some kind of result, but, at the same time, keeping that in mind that we must do our best and make all the efforts that we can do to get the result, and even if we fail to get the result, we must not be sorrowful and must not grieve, thinking that we have done our best and we have spared no pains to accomplish that which we wish to accomplish. Thinking this way, we should remain satisfied that we have done our best under the circumstances, and that is the end. Then work, but, at the same time, feel that you are not working for any material gain or profit, but you are placed under these circumstances and you are doing your best. You are exercising your faculties and powers, but the results will come as the reactions of your actions. You have right to do work and not to ask the results.¹³

¹¹ एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धियोगे त्विमां शृणु ।

बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥२।३९

¹² नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥२।४०

¹³ कर्मण्ये वाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्मुमा ते सङ्गोऽस्तृकर्माणि ॥२।५७

Every action produces a reaction. If you perform your duties faithfully and honestly without desire for gaining anything, you will reap the results without seeking them. Every action is followed by a reaction, and that reaction will come to the source from where the action has proceeded, whether you seek it or not, whether you wish to have it or not.

If you have a good thought, that will bring good results, and evil thoughts will bring evil results, because it is an action, and it must react upon yourself, from which the action has proceeded. For instance, if you sit quietly in your room and think, but do not go out and see any one, do you think that your thoughts will be lost? No, there have been great sages who lived in caves or forests. Do you think they have done less good to the world than those walking and running about trying to do good? No, they have done more good, because they have not wasted a particle of their energy, they have rather concentrated their energy and the waves of thoughts that came out from them, have penetrated other minds.

What help can be given by doing physical work? You may remove many difficulties, or build houses for the poor, but he is the real helper, who sends waves of good thoughts towards all mankind. The great spiritual leaders of the world helped mankind by arousing their spiritual nature and killing their animal sides. Do you think that they sought any results? They are the best workers who do not seek results. As long as we seek results of our acts, so long we are like the mercenary soldiers who fight for money.

A political man who seeks for his name and fame, is he the best worker? No, he is the best worker, who stands by his principles, and fights. One man amongst millions will be an example if he can stand by his principles, without seeking the results of his actions and performing his duty without craving for pleasure or pain, for joy or sorrow, for defeat or success, for gain or loss.

Why are we ordinary? Because we are living on the ordinary plane of selfishness. He who has risen above this plane of selfishness, will be the ideal. He does not care for these results; he is above them, and, at the same time, he works constantly. And such a worker is divine, but one who does work for little things, or for this and that, or for a little name and fame and takes all the unfair and mean methods to accomplish his ends,

cannot be the ideal of our life. But if any one can devote the whole of his life to performing all the works which he is obliged to perform, being placed under the circumstances, without seeking such results, he is sure to attain the goal of all religions and realize the ultimate truth. That person will know his true self very quickly through this path of right work, of Karma Yoga.

CHAPTER VII

METHOD OF ATTAINING THE HIGHEST KNOWLEDGE

We have heard that knowledge of the Absolute and unchangeable Reality which manifests itself within us as the *Atman*, makes us rise above grief, sorrow, misery, and attachment to the things of the world. That absolute knowledge which is very rare, is to be found within very few individuals. Knowledge of our true self, the reality within us, the divinity in us is very rare, but that knowledge alone is the thing that we ought to have.

The knowledge of the relative objects, or objects of the relative phenomenal world or phenomena, does not satisfy our minds, and does not bring unto us that comfort, peace and happiness which we are longing for, but the knowledge of the ultimate Reality, the unchangeable Truth alone, can bring that peace, and can make us perfect even in this earthly life. In this verse, Sri Krishna describes the method by which that knowledge can be obtained.

Arjuna, the commander-in-chief of the Kurukshetra battlefield, was overcome with grief and sorrow at the sight of his relatives, standing before him to fight. We have read, "wonderful is the speaker, wonderful is the hearer of this *Atman*",¹ because it is wonderful, when you come to think of it. It is the oldest of the old, yet it is new. Arjuna's mind was not in that state of having realized it aright. Sri Krishna describes here the method by which that supreme wisdom can be obtained. He says that there are two methods or ways, by which that absolute freedom or Divine realization may come and these two methods or ways are like two different aspects of devotion to the Supreme Reality. These two methods are Jnana Yoga (practice of discrimination and knowledge) and Karma Yoga

¹ आश्चर्यवत् पश्यति कश्चिदेनमाश्चर्यवद् वदति तथैव चान्यः ।

आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥२१२९

(practice of selfless work), or it can be said, wisdom and work.² If we think ourselves as the *Atman*, which is above the material body, the senses, mind and intellect, and if we can constantly hold that thought that we are not the doers or performers of both mental and physical acts, but are above all actions or activities, then our minds are purified and we are free from the bondage of the world (*samsara*). We have already heard that the true nature of the soul is beyond all actions, and so if we can hold firmly on the thought that we are neither the performers of the actions, nor the enjoyer of the results, but are above and beyond all actions or works and no action or work can touch and enchant the true self, then if we let our bodies and minds work all the time, we are not subject to the results that proceed from these works, such as grief, sorrow, pleasure, comfort of any kind, or attachment which comes to the ordinary mortals. But there is yet another way. Those, who do not realize that absolute truth or the true nature of the Self, or the *Atman*, but believe in the Divine Being as the Ruler of the universe, can direct all their works towards the Divine Being, or offer the fruits or results of these works to the Divine Being, and is free from grief, sorrow, and suffering. Work with the object of pleasing the Divine Being is like worshipful service to the Almighty Being.

The works of our daily life, or the works which we do with desires and motives, are selfish to a certain extent, though not entirely selfish. If all these works can be directed towards the Divine Being, if we can hold the thought that these works which we are performing with our mind and body, are for the service of the Almighty Being, and do not think of the results, that very moment we must offer the results to the Almighty Being. Let the results go to the Almighty Being, and let it be His and not mine. That is the attitude which the devotees, the Bhaktas, hold in their minds. There is a constant thought of the Divine Being in the minds of the Bhaktas and so all works of them are directed towards the Divine Being simply for the pleasure of the Divine Being. The real Bhaktas do not gain anything, yet they do not cease from work, and they per-

² लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निश्च पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।

ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानं कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥३॥

form work all the time, and by this method, 'there is neither waste of energy, nor can there be any harm, nor obstruction in the spiritual progress', they are free and escaped. Even a small amount of work done on this line with this thought, will save you from great troubles.³ This is a great consolation. Ordinarily our minds are constantly disturbed by anxieties, desires, and worries, regarding the things which arise as results of our works. We can get rid of all this, if we do not think of the results, but after performing the works to our best ability, if we leave the results in the hands of the Almighty, we can be perfectly happy and contented. Very few people indeed, can do this, but what a great happiness it brings! Sri Krishna says that the minutest work done with this divine thoughts, will purify our hearts, because if there be no desire behind any work, whether mental or physical, for the time being at least, we have become free from desire, and the work becomes a help to that state of absolute freedom, which is the goal, and it is freedom from all bondage.

Bondage comes as the result of desires. If you do certain things with a certain desire, that opens up to those conditions of bondage, and makes you attached to those conditions, and it is pretty hard to break that attachment. Ordinary persons cannot do it, but those who direct their energy and works to the Almighty Being, can be free from attachment very easily. Because whatever you seek for your own benefit or comfort, aids in making you attached to your selfish nature and that is flattering to your selfish nature.

Now, it is the nature of the mind to vibrate. It is the nature of a man to work, and he is forced to do work in the world (*samsara*) by his active nature. Nature creates habits and tendencies which instigate or compel a man to do work. Habits can be said to be the second nature and they compel a man to be engaged in work. So a man cannot remain inactive by nature. It is also true that until and unless a man does some work (without asking the results of them), his mind or heart will not be purified and he will not be able to attain the knowledge of the *Atman* (*naishkarman*). So in this

³ नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

स्वल्पमपस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महदो भयात् ॥२।४०

world of action, we should not be inactive, giving indulgence to idleness and selfish attitude, because inactivity brings death and destruction to the material body. So we will perform works selflessly (*yajna*), otherwise we will be bound by the chain of works. It is the secret of work, otherwise we will be bound by the chain of works. And it is the secret of work that we will do works without asking the results, or will work in the spirit of worship of God;⁴ because this spirit will remove from us the ego-centric idea and will make our mind calm and quite so as to concentrate and meditate upon the all-consciousness *Atman*. Action then appears as inaction, work then manifests as selfless work, or worship of God. Sri Krishna discloses this secret to Arjuna that you have right only to work and not to the result, because he who asks for the result, is known as a miser (*kripana*). A miser only hoards his treasures, but can make their best use neither for himself, nor for others. So, be above selfishness and dedicate yourself for the cause of the world, and then you will be able to go beyond the bindings of the world and will be free forever and ever.

Sri Krishna says: "If we can sacrifice the desires for results and after sacrificing these desires, if we can do the works to the best or of our best ability, these works will be the means of purifying our hearts and nature." When purification comes, the knowledge of the *Atman*, or the knowledge of the Reality, or the knowledge of the Self, becomes revealed. You know: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Purity of heart is the pre-condition of God-vision and that purity can come when we perform works with a view to pleasing the Almighty Being, and not to satisfy selfish purposes. This is the method of Karma Yoga, as we call it.

In this method of devotion by works, there is only one thought. In the midst of various kinds of work, the only thought that is constantly present in the mind of the worker,

‘न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽस्तुते ।

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते ह्यवशं कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥३।४-५

is the service to the Almighty Being That is the only thought, no matter what work he is doing with his body and mind. He does not think of the results, but he thinks of the Almighty Being, who will receive those works and be pleased. But their minds are generally filled with thoughts of the results. They think of this or that thing, but if you keep that one thought that all these things which you are thinking of, are for the pleasure and service of the Almighty Being, then your mind will become concentrated upon the Divine Being all the time, no matter under what circumstances you may be placed.⁵

When we have various desires and tendencies as ordinary mortals have, if we are directed by these various desires and tendencies and perform works, we get results. Some of the results we enjoy in this life, and some of them we do not. We may perform certain works with a view to a certain object and we shall have to wait patiently, perhaps for ten years or for twenty or fifty years. If you invest money in a mine, or in stocks, you will have to wait until the time comes, as it depends upon the success, and some results may come in this life. In the meantime you also think and even after death you will continue to think of those things and the mine where you have invested your money and those desires will drag you down there. So, in the next incarnation even, you will have to reap the results of these thoughts and ideas and you will do the same things over and again. These thoughts will force you to do these acts and think of these things, and afterwards reap the results. In this way, one may reap the results continuously, birth after birth, going through different stages of evolution. That is an idea very common in India. It is very rare in this country, but it is in accordance with the laws of nature. We live in the present, but, at the same time, this present state

⁵ यस्तिन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
 कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तेः स विशिष्यते ॥
 नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वत् कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
 शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिध्येदकर्मणः ॥
 यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणोऽन्वयत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
 तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥३१४,५,७,८-९

would not exist, if it were not related to its past and future. If you do not think of the past and future, the present is dead and gone. Thus, every word that you utter, is present for the time being, but the moment it is uttered, it has become a thing of the past, and if you do not think of the future, as for instance, you are going to live in the future, your life is going to continue, you cannot do anything, and everything will vanish. The whole universe is constantly changing and there is nothing that exists for two seconds in the same way and also in the same space. Under these circumstances, we must remember that there is such a thing as future and our life will continue in future. We may not think of that when our minds are bothered with different anxieties and worries and different thoughts and ideas, connected with this present life, but, at the same time, we must remember that all thoughts and ideas that are in our minds at present, will not end with death, but they will continue to produce their results and will have to come back, if our desires are earthly at the time of death. Because these earthly desires can be fulfilled under the conditions of this earth, and if our desires are heavenly, we will go to heaven. If we have desires for divine things which we cannot get here, those things will be found in some other realm, higher or lower, and we shall be bound to go there in order to have our desires fulfilled. But those who have that one thought of doing the work for the Divine Being, do not worry about the results. They may not think of their future, but they are perfectly happy and contented, because they are sure that through that one thought they will go to the realm of divinity and, as they do not seek the results, the results will not come to them, because the results come only to those who seek them.

If we demand certain things we get them, and if we do not make any demand, we cannot get them. The things may come, but they do not mean anything. As long as we have that strong longing for a thing, so long we get it and we are perfectly happy for the time being. So, those who are devoted to the Almighty Being in this way and perform their works for that Divine Being, have one thought and one idea in the mind and that is the means to become free from these various conditions of bondage. Even those who can think of themselves as the Supreme Spirit, or the *Atman*, will have the same result and be free from

bondage and suffering, just as the devotee to the Supreme Being in all the actions of his daily life.

All the scriptures are meant for the phenomenal world. The scriptures describe many works and prescribe many sacrifices for the attainment of pleasure and celestial happiness. By scriptures are generally meant the Vedas, because the Vedas are the oldest in the world. There, in the Vedas, you will find two portions. The first part is devoted to the works and their results and it describes the heaven (*svarga*). In India, the idea is that there are many heavens, known as the realms of the ancestors, and the realms of *devas*, which are a little higher than the realms of the ancestors. There are the realms of music where musicians go. There are the realms of the higher beings and they come to the heaven of the personal God. But, in truth, that is considered as phenomenal. Besides, all these different realms are within the range of the phenomena. People who have desires of different kinds, perform works and wish to attain to certain pleasures and to enjoy them for a certain length of time. There are works and various kinds of sacrifices, such as giving food to the poor, worshipping a certain deity and a certain phase of the Almighty Being with a certain desire, and performing some rituals and ceremonials, etc. So the first portion of the Vedas is devoted to all these things narrated above. The second portion is higher and is the knowledge portion which is the foundation of this philosophy of the *Gita*. The *Bhagavad Gita* is based upon the knowledge portion of the Vedas. It finds fault with the ultimate conclusions of the ceremonials or ritualistic portions of the Vedas.⁶

Now, those who perform the ceremonial works with a view to going to heaven, enjoy pleasures and peace, but they again return to this phenomenal plane and suffer from cares and anxieties. They will have to become the *devas* or the bright

⁶ The *Gita* 3.3.

The Vedas are divided into *karmakanda* and *jnanakanda*. The *karmakanda* prescribes different kinds of sacrifice and function (*yajnas* and *satras*), and says that as a result of the function, a performer goes to heaven to enjoy celestial peace. The *jnanakanda* teaches to acquire knowledge and wisdom, which help men to realize that the heavens are phenomenal and temporary, and permanent peace and happiness come from the realization of the *Atman*, who resides in all animate and inanimate objects. The *Upanishads* and the *Aranyakas* are included in the *jnanakanda* of the Vedas, because they teach men the highest knowledge and peace, which transcend all bindings of the delusive world.

spirits and be lords of a certain realm like an emperor for thousands or millions of years, but after a certain period, they will have to come back and be born again in the form of human being, and this idea is very common in India.

In these verses of the *Gita*:

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
 वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीतिवादिनः ॥
 कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
 क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥
 भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
 व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥
 त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
 निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्तत्त्वो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥⁷

You will find description of the ritualistic grandeur of the Vedas, which deludes them who perform those sacrifices or sacrificial works to get pleasures of the heavens and think of these pleasures and celestial powers as the highest ideal of life. The whole life and all the actions of body and mind of the performers of the sacrifices are guided by desires and motives, and they seek powers, either in this world or in the next. But they cannot go beyond the realm of phenomena, rather they stay within that realm of desires. It should be remembered that all the pleasures that rise from the contact of our senses, mind, intellect, or body, are relational and phenomenal, and, therefore, are not eternal. Therefore be selfless, do work for God, go beyond pleasure and pain and all desires.

The works that are described in the ritualistic parts (*karmakanda*) of the Vedas, lead the individuals up to a certain point and make them stay there for a certain length of time, but at the expiration of that time, they come back and go through other stages of evolution.⁸ In the heavens, there is anxiety or worry of a different kind, the difference is only in degrees, it may not be exactly like what we have here; the conditions are different and the anxieties are different. Those whose

⁷ Vide the *Gita*, 2. 42-45.

⁸ क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।

minds are deluded by those thoughts of celestial pleasures and happiness, cannot fix their minds or souls upon that supreme Being or Supreme knowledge. They cannot perform their works as the service to the Almighty Being, so they do not reach that state of superconsciousness. In that state which is described as *samadhi* or superconsciousness, or celestial and eternal happiness, manifests itself even in this life, so those who perform their works with selfish motives, or to obtain some powers, cannot attain to the superconscious state of *samadhi*. They cannot gain that happiness which is the ideal of our life

So Sri Krishna says that all the requirements of life are fulfilled with the attainment of the highest knowledge i.e. the knowledge of the *Atman*, or Brahman, as requirements in different pools and tanks are greatly fulfilled in the great lakes (or rivers, or seas), which contain plenty of water. The *Upanishad* says:

‘एकस्मिन् विज्ञाने सर्वविज्ञानम् भवति’ i.e. he, who attains the Brahman-knowledge, remains ever-satisfied and aspires nothing of the world except the Brahman.⁹ Sri Krishna really warns men not to run after will-o’-the-wisp or phantom of the changing world, but to seek after the Truth or Reality which is immortal and divine. Everything of the world is covered by the Brahman, and so when that Brahman-knowledge is attained, all aspirations, askings and desires are fulfilled, nothing remains unfulfilled.

The scriptures are meant for those who are in the realm of phenomena and seek the results which lie in that realm. If we read the scriptures of other countries, we find that their heaven is not beyond the phenomenal world. The Christian heaven also is not beyond the phenomenal realm. The Moham-
medan heaven, or that of the Buddhists, or that of any other

⁹ यावानर्थं उदपाने सर्वतः संसृजते ।

तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥२॥४६

Sridhara Swami says,

सर्वेषु वेदेषु (तदुत्तर्कमफलरूपः अथ तावान् सर्वेऽपि) विजानतः (व्यवसाया-
त्मिकाबुद्धियुक्तस्य) ब्राह्मणस्य (ब्रह्मनिष्ठस्य भवत्येव । ब्रह्मानन्दे क्षुद्रानन्दानाम्
अन्तर्भावात् ‘एतस्यैवानन्दस्यान्यानि भूतानि मात्रासुपजीवन्ति’ (—बृहः उः ४।३।३२)
इति श्रुतेः तस्मादियमेव बुद्धिः सुबुद्धिरित्यर्थः ।

sect or creed, all are in the realm of phenomena, which is full of attachments and cravings. So, that which is phenomenal, cannot be eternal; it is subject to change.

Being subject to time, condition, and space, all phenomenal objects are subject to change. Sphere or space like *svarga* may not be physical or mental space. It may be psychic space, but still it is not the highest, as it is subject to change. All the works, described in the Vedas and other scriptures, are meant for those who have such desires. The injunction comes ; "Be free from all desires whether for celestial peace or happiness, do not care for them, do not entertain them." If we do not seek these pleasures, may we seek pleasures of the world? The reply is: "No, be free from all sorts of pleasure or pain, heat and cold, happiness and unhappiness, etc., rise above them even if they are true in this world." "Therefore perform everything without asking the result and then you will be free and will attain to the highest goal."¹⁰

But you can say that there are pains and sufferings which are unutterable. What should you do under those circumstances? How can you bear unutterable pain? So be patient and rise above those conditions and put your mind on a higher place. Another thing you should do that you should not try to acquire anything earthly, and should not also spend your energy while trying to protect it. If you do not possess anything, do not waste your energy in trying to possess something. This is a thing very difficult to practise, because, if you wish to keep your mind tranquil and undisturbed, all the efforts you would make for trying to acquire something, will be in your way, will not bring happiness or peace, will distract your attention, will make you think of those conditions, will make you worry and bring anxiety, and then the result will be suffering. And when you do possess something, your mind is disturbed with the thought that you may lose that thing, so you are constantly trying to keep it in touch with you, or keep yourself in touch with it. If your money be invested in something, or in the hands of some other friend, you may think that he will deceive or rob you, and your constant thought is in that direction. Then

¹⁰ तस्मादक्तं सततं कायं कर्म समाचर ।

असक्तो ह्याचरणं कर्म परमाप्नोति पुरुषः ॥३१९॥

you cannot serve God. Therefore it is said: "Those whose minds are directed towards the acquisition of property, or things that ordinary mortals demand, and also those whose minds are directed towards the protection of those things which they do possess, cannot worship the Divine Being in peace and tranquillity."

Worldly-minded people cannot be the worshippers of God as long as their minds are in the world. You will have to gather and concentrate your thoughts, correct your ideas, and make your mind free from all distractions (*vrittis*), before you can serve God. Those who can devote their minds to the Supreme Being, living in the world and doing all the works of the world, are great indeed as they have tremendous strength, but it is extremely difficult, you can find the results right away.

If that be the condition what should you do? See God everywhere in everything. As long as you are serving in the world and are doing all these things, instead of thinking of these results, be in His hands. Let your minds and bodies work constantly, but keep this one idea of the *Atman*, the Supreme Being, prominently before your mental eye, day and night. The result will come to you as peace, happiness, and freedom from all bondages. You need not worry about food, it had been ready before you were born, you did not bring it with you. Can you have that faith that when you have come to this world of phenomena, you will get your food? You may have to do some kind of work, perhaps, under the conditions of this country. You may not get your share from the things which grow spontaneously upon this earth, but still the ways will open out and you will find the means by which your body and soul will be kept together.

In India, there are thousands and thousands who live this kind of life. They do not possess anything. The country being tropical, affords the best advantages, and people can live in this country (India) without suffering from extreme cold and changes of weather. They can live under trees in the forest, or in small huts. They do not have to make elaborate preparation for changes of weather and for lighting the house, etc. In winter, they make a fire in the court or hall, and sit around, and just enjoy that warmth. The cold is not so bitter as it is here. In the mountains, where I have been, it is just as bad as

it is here, but, even in these places, there are sages who live on simple food, and are perfectly happy. The idea is that we should not worry about it. If we are placed under circumstances where we shall have to work for bread and butter, let us do it, but think at the same time that we are not devoting our energy to the cause of bread and butter, but we think of the Supreme Being as the highest ideal and, by keeping the body and soul together, we shall be ready to worship God and make the best use of our life. This body is given for the service of the Divine Being and, in order to be worthy of the Divine Being, we must keep it in proper condition. Therefore, we must have bread and butter and, as long as we are here under these circumstances, we must support this body so that it will be of good help to this work.

Happiness comes through our devotion to self-knowledge, and this devotion includes all other kinds of happiness and pleasure which we can obtain in this life, or in any other realm, or in heaven, or through any kind of work. All this is included in the happiness and peace which come to the soul, devoted to the Supreme Being, or which has realized the true nature of the *Atman*, just as where there is a wide-spread sheet of pure water, we can get all the effects, like drinking, bathing, and all the other utilities of water. But, if we have small tanks, or wells, or small lakes, some one would be good for drinking, another might not be good for bathing, etc., but one great sheet of pure water includes all the pleasures that can be obtained through the use of water. So, this one happiness, which is the highest, includes all other smaller pleasures and smaller happinesses.

Here we find the word 'Brahman'. The real meaning of the word Brahman is that which is vast and all-embracing. It means the eternal Truth or Reality. It does not mean some one who is born of Brahmin parents, but the original meaning of the word Brahman is one who has attained to that supreme wisdom or self-knowledge, or one who has realized Brahman, or who is the knower of the Brahman. So, whether a man be born in this country, or in any other nation, if he realizes the eternal truth, he is the Brahman. Now, through some kinds of work and devotion to the Supreme Being, one attains to the purity of heart, (*chittashuddhi*), and from that purity of heart

proceeds right knowledge, right understanding, and right discrimination between the real and the unreal, between reality and falsity.

At present, we are mistaking the real for the unreal and spirit for matter and we cannot think of ourselves as separate from the material body, we cannot think of the *Atman* or the true nature of the soul as immortal and divine, because it is so mixed up and imbedded, as it were, in the mire of this phenomenal existence, we are unable to separate them. But we shall have to separate the real from the unreal by proper and right discrimination (*viveka* and *vichara*).¹¹

First of all, we will have to understand the nature of matter (*jada*) and energy (*chaitanya*) and then compare it with that of our true self, the *Atman*, and see whether we could be anything insentiate as matter, or whether matter exists in relation to us. All these ideas will not come to a mind which is worrying with worldly thoughts and desires. So when the mind is purified, all these thoughts will come by themselves, and shall be able to see things as they are distinctly, without making any mistake and being deluded by the attractions of the world, or by the attachment of the worldly objects. When through right discrimination, true knowledge comes, that knowledge brings our souls in touch with the eternal truth, and then, if we concentrate our thoughts and minds upon that eternal truth, we realize it. At present we cannot think of God, and cannot think that Being, being under whose guidance we are working. Where does He exist? Does He exist at all? As long as our minds are impure and thoughts are on the lowest plane, we cannot get any clear idea or conception of God, but the moment we begin to see that we are something different from all these material changes i.e., changes of matter and body, we get a divine glimpse of that which is eternal and infinite, and gradually from that glimpse of the Infinite, we begin to realize the true nature of the Infinite and come to know that the Infinite is inseparable from ourself and it is the source of all happiness, and all blessed qualities proceeded from this infinite source, which is the *Atman*.

Then, if we can meditate on that infinite source, and can

¹¹ Sankara has discussed this problem in his commentary on the falsity (*adhyasa-bhasyam*) of the *Brahmasutra*.

realize that we are above all these conditions, and then freedom comes to us. In order to attain to that freedom and unchangeable happiness, we should work and direct the results of works to the Almighty Being. "To work thou hast the right, but not to the fruits thereof"¹² Do not be the cause of the results of work, and, at the same time, do not be attached to absolute inaction. Do not be dull and lazy and do not give up all works, but you will have to do some work and will have to know that particular method of work which will help you in getting out of all these sufferings and that is what is called the secret of work.

The secret of work must be understood by every individual. We must hear it over and over again and constantly repeat it within ourselves, and keep our eyes and ears open, so that we may think what is going on around us, within ourselves, what we ought to do, and what we ought not to do. "Being steady in this Karma Yoga, thou shalt work for gaining of the highest wisdom", and that is the supreme peace. Even that desire for supreme peace and bliss will not rise in our mind. We should not keep that as the object of our work, and if we can do work in this way, we will attain to the supreme bliss.

Success and failure proceed as the results of ordinary works. So we must learn equanimity in success and failure, we must work always,¹³ and that kind of work will bring peace and happiness through the purification of heart or mind. The work which proceeds from selfish motives and desires, is lower than this kind of work which has no particular selfish motives behind. Therefore take refuge in that self-knowledge, or knowledge of the Supreme Being, and devote to the Supreme Being through work and be free from all thoughts that arise from a mundane existence. He who can work in this way, is never affected by good and evil that

¹² कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ॥२॥४७

¹³ योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्धयसिद्धयोः समो भुत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥**

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद् योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥१॥४८,५०

proceed from work of virtue or vice, merit or demerit. He is above that. He does not seek this or that, and this skill (*kaushalam*) in work is called Yoga. You will have to live in this world and direct all your energies towards work, physical or mental, but you must see that you are not making any new *karma* by which you will be tied down or to be entangled in, the mundane world, or by which you will be brought back to these conditions again after the death of the body. Thus you will become free.

In India, the Hindu philosophers have devoted most of their time to studying the relation between action and reaction (*karma* and *akarma*). It is the one aim, proving the law of action and reaction, or cause and sequence. Whatever you see, or feel, or perceive, in this universe, is the result of that law of cause and sequence, and you cannot get out of it. The world of phenomena will vanish like a soap bubble in the air if this law cease to exist or manifest itself, even for a second. So they have studied this law very carefully, and the whole system of Karma Yoga is based upon this law of cause and sequence, what causes produce these results, under what conditions, how long they stay, and where do they lead to. And the tendency is to get out of this law of cause and sequence.

The nature of the soul is not bound by any law, but your mind, body, and senses are bound by these laws, and if you can hold yourselves on that plane which is above all laws, you are free from them, even in this life. But if you identify yourselves with those things subject to law, you cannot get out of them, you are bound, and that is the idea very strong in this philosophy of work. Those who have given up all results of their works and work with no desires, either in this world, or in heaven, become free from birth and death and go to the abode of eternal happiness.

That abode of eternal happiness is not very far from us. It is not at a certain distance from us, but it is a state which can be realized even in this life, and it never changes. Under whatever circumstances you may be placed, or you can think of, you will find it just the same.

Those who have succeeded in meditating upon the true nature of the self, or the *Atman*, have realized that state of blissfulness, happiness, and peacefulness. Whenever any dis-

turbance comes to your daily life, if you can go above that state, shutting yourself off from the external world and the conditions and turmoils, that surround you and can hold you within yourself, and there you find that peacefulness and happiness which every individual is longing for. The devotees of the Supreme Being, or the knowers of the true Self, go to the same goal, and the goal is eternal happiness, existence, intelligence, and perfection.

CHAPTER VIII

PERFORMANCE OF WORK AND CONTROL OF SENSES

Those who perform the works for the service of the Divine Being, attain to the highest goal in the end. Those who do not seek the ordinary results of their works, leave or dedicate the results in the hands of the Almighty and constantly work for works sake, become free from all grief, sorrow, suffering, pain and also from ordinary temporary pleasures of earthly life. They become also free from rebirth.

You must remember that rebirth, or reincarnation, is caused by our desires for the results of our works. Works which we perform in this life, may produce their results or not, but those which have not produced the results in this life, will not be dead, but will remain in the form of seeds or germs in the latent state, and come up again in the next incarnation and make individuals work and get the results. It may be that these results of works of our present life will help us in getting proper environments for the kind of body for the fulfilment of those desires which the individual soul might have had during a previous incarnation. This is the best explanation of the fact that we see around us the inequalities amongst different people. Often the question arises in our minds, why a particular person is born under favourable conditions, and others are not? But we must remember that these are the results of works performed in previous incarnations (*janmantara-karmani*).

There are some pleasures connected with this life, and there are some disadvantages too. A poor man may not have all the luxuries and comforts of life and he may be considered poor and wretched from a worldly standpoint, but he may devote his whole time and attention to the realization of truth. In that way he may be happy, but still his earthly life may be full of misery, suffering, sorrow, and he cannot stop it though the environment is absolutely perfect. If we think that our surroundings and food are unbearable, we shall have to think that we have got these as the results of the works of a pre-

vious incarnation, but at the same time we must struggle hard to get out of these conditions, to be free from them, and to remove the obstacles.

Without consolation we cannot live in this world and this is the best consolation. He who believes in the creation of evil, has no consolation. Why should the Creator give so much good to some individuals and not to others? Why should a God allow a creator of evil or take advantage of His children, etc. In these ideas, we find greater consolation and more happiness. Of course, the results of our actions are various. Some produce pain and sufferings, but there are good results which bring happiness and pleasure. Some may produce good results for the present, but they may be a source of bondage in the end. The chain of iron binds, but a gold chain will bind just as well. It will be only different in degrees.

The pleasure and happiness which we seek in this earthly life, will become more and more the cause of bondage which cannot be removed. Our pain and suffering may be a source of bondage. But we can get rid of them more easily if we remember that the highest ideal of this earthly life is not earthly pleasures. They do not bring satisfaction and happiness. They only help us in deluding ourselves for the time being and also in thinking that we are very happy, but they do not last long and they last only for a few seconds, minutes, or hours, or months. The highest ideal, on the contrary, is that state, from which there is no return, and which makes one fearless. Even fear of death will appear as nothing, and no fear of any other kind will rise in our mind.

There is a difference between happiness and pleasure. Pleasure is not happiness, as happiness comes in that peaceful state of mind, when the mind is not disturbed by anxieties, or not distracted by desires for pleasures. That calm state of mind is called a state of happiness. It is not a state of indifference, but it is entirely a different condition of mind. That state is what is called '*tamas*'. It is just like stupor, and that state is not desirable. Some people think that the peaceful state of mind is the same as the state of indifference, but we must differentiate the state of indifference from that peaceful state of mind.

When your mind is not distracted by anything at the time

of meditation and, at the same time, is absolutely steady and is in touch with your ideal, then you long for the continuance of that state and wish to remain in that state forever, and if any one calls and disturbs you in any way, you feel unhappy. That state cannot be obtained by any other thing. It is obtained neither by possessions, nor by seeking pleasures, nor by this or that. It comes to the soul when the mind is undisturbed by anxiety or desires and remains calm. As long as your mind is overpowered by desires, you cannot have that rest, and that restlessness is called the impurity of the mind. All our ordinary desires, worries and passions produce that restlessness in our minds, and that which produces that restlessness, should not be encouraged. We must try to make the mind restful and peaceful. How can we do it? We can do it by devotion to work. When our mind is in that state of indifference, we must work and do something keeping in view that it is not a selfish act, but that we are doing it as a service to God, and, if you keep that thought in your mind, you can spend all the energy that is necessary, but at the same time you keep the ideal constantly before your mind.

This kind of work will help you in purifying the heart. The purification of the heart means putting the heart in a restful state, and that can be accomplished in various ways. By discrimination and also by work through devotion, you can direct your mind towards the Supreme Being or the ideal. If you have no ideal, make an ideal. In India, there are many who have gone to their spiritual teacher. They look upon their ideal as divine manifestation in the form of spiritual teacher. They do not have to imagine anything but the Divinity that dwells in that individual, or is manifested in their spiritual master and, taking that spiritual master as the ideal or as a part of the Divinity, they perform all their works and give all the results to the Divine Being, and become free from all anxieties and sorrows.

Others have their ideal like the Incarnations of Krishna, Rama, Siva, Kali, and others. They keep that ideal before their mind and make a picture or image of it and keep that as the constant picture before the mental eye. You can take the form of Christ or any other form. The form of Christ will be just as imaginary as the form of a Chinese or Hindu God. The

pictures you have seen, do not represent Christ, and the stone images you see in churches, are not exactly like the figure of Christ, but they are just as imaginary as anything else. If you give a spiritual meaning to the ideal and have it connected with the highest Supreme Being, you are sure to get the highest and best results.

“When thy mind will be free from the mire and will cross beyond the mire of delusion, then thou shalt attain to a dispassion for things that you have heard of, thou shalt hear regarding the fruit of actions”.¹ What is this mire of delusion that makes you forget the real and mistake the unreal for the real and makes you think of the non-eternal things of the world are eternal? You think that you will never lose the things which you possess and your relatives will stay with you forever. The spiritualists try to keep in touch with their relatives even after death, not thinking that the law of action and reaction will drag them towards different places. Without thinking of that law, they believe they will have this phenomenal life even beyond the grave. That delusion means ignorance of the laws of nature and that ignorance makes you attached to the possessions which you have. You call these things as yours, you call this your chair and or your horse, or your dog, but this is only the temporary relation and you cannot have that eternal relation with these things which you possess. Eternal relation can only exist between the soul and the soul, between the individual soul and the Divine Being, and not to any other individual soul, because individual souls will be dragged by their own *karma* to different environments. When you see the divine part in any being, you see that divine part in your nearest and dearest friend and relative, and when you can realize that divine part of that soul relation, then you are absolutely sure of what you are doing. But if you have blood relations, that is temporary.

We say in India: “What is difference between the earthly father and the spiritual father?” To this it can be said that difference is, one is the father of the body and the other is the father of the soul. The body is temporary and the soul is eter-

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।

तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रतस्व च ॥२।५२

nal. As long as you have gotten your body from such parents, you have obligations and duties to perform, but these duties are not the duties of the soul, they are the duties on account of the instrument you have received from them. But the soul relation is much nearer. It is the nearest thing, and that is the reason why one can sacrifice the parents' love and can be devoted to the spiritual master, just as the Swamis do in India. Jesus the Christ said: "Who is my father and who is my mother?" In fact, the eternal Being is the father and the mother. Realize these statements and you will find that they are absolutely true.

When you are free from this mire of delusion, you begin to see things as they are. Then you take the real for the unreal and the unreal for the real, the eternal for the non-eternal and the non-eternal for the eternal. Your minds become attached to the real and the eternal and you do not care for the non-eternal and the unreal. All the fruits of your actions are non-eternal and temporary. They last for a short time producing different effects on our bodies and minds, but the eternal relation is indestructible. You can devote the whole of your attention to the eternal side and become un-attached to the non-eternal side. This dispassion comes through devotion and work. It comes only by doing work and not by seeking the result. At what time does that purification of the heart come? One of the signs of purification of the heart is the lack of passion for non-eternal pleasures. It is not known at what time the purification will come to any individual, but it will come at any time. How long will you have to work to get this purity? No one can tell it. One may get it in a few days, or in a few months, or in a few years, and another in a few incarnations, but still nothing will be lost. Another thing will come to your mind at that time. These earthly things do not belong to you, but that which is eternal, is your property. You belong to the eternal and that belongs to you. That is the real relation. You will call yourself a child of the Divinity. In India, there are twice-born castes.² The second birth is referred to by Christ in his teachings.

When your mind will not be perplexed by what you have heard of or read of in different scriptures or other books of the

² They are the Brahmins by caste and are known as *dvija* or twice-born.

same nature, but will stand firm and steady in your true Self, then you will understand that you have attained to what we call Yoga. There are many scriptures and books and we, in truth, waste our energy in reading them constantly. What good can you gather from novels? It is waste of time, but it will not appear to you as a waste of time until you have passed beyond that mire of delusion. When you have crossed beyond that, you will find that there is nothing outside such books as treat of those higher truths, and that will please you. That which you held to be very pleasant five days ago, will not appear to you as pleasant; it will appear to you as meaningless and senseless.

At that time the mind will not be disturbed by those objects, described in different books. They may be very helpful to many living in the mire of delusion, but they are of no use to one who has crossed beyond that mire. Even the scriptures will be of no use to him, and the Vedas are the only scriptures which speak of this: "One whose mind is steady and firm in the true Self, stands upon the head of all the scriptures of the world".

Without that feeling, you cannot expect to have the highest wisdom. Purification of the heart also means that our mind will be free from jealousy, hatred, and all those things which we possess in our ordinary earthly life. All doubts of all kinds that rise in our minds (these doubts are also the signs of impurity and imperfection) mean that you have not attained to that steadiness in the Self, or in the true Being, but when your mind is steady in the Divine, you cannot doubt anything, and then all doubts cease.

Your mind is steady at the time of meditation, because meditation comes after concentration is fulfilled. Your mind is not in the state which is called the waking state and not in the state of dreams, when you are seeing all kinds of visions. (Visions are not the highest, so rise above them). The time will come when your mind will remain steady, and undisturbed by doubts or any other disturbance and when the visions which you find to be helpful attractive and charming at present, will appear to you just like the sights which you see with the external eye. They will lose their charm in the end. But that state does not come very easily, it requires a long practice. So we

must practise until that state is firm and steady upon the ideal.³

"As the flame of a candle is not disturbed when there is no wind, but it burns steadily tapering at the point, so when the mind will not be disturbed, then it will be steady. So, when the wind of desire comes, our mind is disturbed and is not steady and it vascillates and moves from one idea to another, but, as long as you have that state, keep the other before your mind as distinct and say, "My mind, you do not want this or that, so keep firm and steady upon the ideal".

In this way, after practising for a long time, you will find that the true nature of your mind will be in perfect harmony with the Divine Ideal, and there will be nothing between them. As the river flows steadily and constantly into the ocean, so the river of the individual mind will flow steadily and constantly into the ocean of the Divinity, and there will be neither any break, nor any obstacle in the way, and then you will feel that your wisdom or knowledge is steady, no matter under what circumstances you are placed. Then you are firm and steady forever and nothing will disturb you. Even if the whole world goes to pieces, it will not disturb you.

When you do not seek the things of the world, if you lose your property, friends, and relatives, your mind will not be disturbed. You will not need them, but you will need that which is the nearest and dearest to your soul and which is permanent and deathless. This state is called steadiness, and in that state, higher knowledge or supreme wisdom dawns. Having heard this, Arjuna asked this question: "What is the description of one with steady knowledge and who is steady in contemplation? How does he speak, what does he say, and how does

³ Patanjali says in the *Yogasutras* that constant efforts for practice are necessary to make the mind steady and calm:

‘तत्र यत्नोऽभ्यासः । अभ्यास-वैराग्यभ्यां तच्चिरोद्यः ।’

The *Bhagavad Gita* also says:

‘अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण व गृह्यते’ । (५.३.१६)

By the practices of *abhyasa* (constant effort) and *vairagya* (renunciation) the mind (the modifications of the mind) should be controlled and concentrated.

he move?"⁴ He wants to know what are the characteristics of one who has this firmness and steadiness in this supreme knowledge and wisdom. How can we differentiate that person from the ordinary people of the world?

Here there are four questions: First, the description, the characteristics, marks, or signs by which we can know the nature of the person. Secondly, how he walks, sits, and moves. There are two spiritual stages which have been referred to; the first question refers to the state of *samadhi* when the mind is steady. How does he (*sthitaprajna*) feel at that time when his mind and heart or soul are steady in contemplation upon the Supreme? Secondly, the other three questions refer to this state, when he comes down from that state and lives in the world.

The first one is answered in the light of the queries. When one having controlled the desires of the mind, is satisfied with the Self alone, then that person is called steady in knowledge.⁵ Here are the characteristics of one who possesses that supreme knowledge in the world, and we must try to attain to it. That highest state must be acquired, and until it comes to our possession, we must struggle and keep up the practices. There are various desires which we have now. There are various conditions of our mind and all these should be kept under control. At the time of meditation your mind will not be disturbed by jealousy or hatred or attachment to this or that. Even your eye-attachment will be to the Supreme, or to the Ideal. When your mind is not at all disturbed by any other thought or idea, that is steadiness (*sthitavastha* or *samadhi*). Then you forget the pain of the body. When a mosquito bites at that time, you

⁴ स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव।

स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत् ब्रजेन किम् ॥२।५४

Regarding *bhāṣā*, Sankara says.

“किं भाषणं वचनं कथमसौ परैर्भाष्यते * * ॥”

⁵ प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥२।५५

The *Katha Upanishad* (2.3.14) also says,

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः ।

अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥

will not feel it, if you have separated your mind from the sense of touch, and you can do that very easily.

To the sense of hearing you have become deaf and your idea of time will vanish at that time. If your eyes are wide open, you will not see anything if you keep your eyes fixed on one point in the wall, or anywhere. Keep it there for some time, you will not see anything. So when the mind is concentrated upon the Ideal, whether the eyes are open, or closed, it will not make any difference. *Samadhi* can be obtained with eyes open or closed, and when there is that satisfaction constant, you do not want to get this thing or that thing, but you have got everything. What you possess is all you want, you do not want anything else. You do not go around to shops and look at things in the window. The shop-keepers are playing the fool with many people. They take advantage of them, but when they have got everything, they do not need these things, and are not deceived by any one.

The necessary things of life are very simple. You can get them very easily, but the idea is to devote the greater part of your energy to seeking that contentment within yourself and not to trying to get it from the outside.* You may go on possessing this or that thing forever, but when you have this higher contentment, you do not care whether these things are yours or not. If you have no servants, you do not care, you can take care of yourself, you can do the things you have to do very easily. This is the way when the mind is not satisfied with the lower self.

While translating the word *Atman* into English, you must not mistake it for the lower self. It is not the personality and so you must not be self-satisfied in that sense that produces all kinds of egotism and other thoughts and ideas which are not good, but it is a different state altogether. Being satisfied with that union with the Divinity you possess divinity within you.

* Sadhak Ramaprasad instructs men of the world not to go anywhere, not to follow the religious method of another, but to remain satisfied with that method which has been prescribed for him and to be satisfied with the supreme knowledge or wisdom which he bears in his own bosom or heart. Ramaprasad sings,

आपनाते आपनि येको मन
येओ नाको कारु घरे ।
या नाचि ताइ बसे पावि
खोज निज अन्तःपुरे ॥

Remember that you are a part of the Divine Being; you are a child of immortal Bliss. That kind of satisfaction is what is meant here. You are one with the Supreme. If all these desires were the principal attributes of the soul, then you could never get rid of them. All those thoughts and ideas belong to the mind and not to the soul or *Atman*. So you will be able to separate your mind from your Self. You will then be just like a witness (*sakshi*) looking down upon your mind from above and the thoughts and ideas are just bubbling up. That will make you see what is the difference between the mind and the *Atman*—the unreality and the Reality.

If these thoughts and ideas were the constant or permanent attributes of the soul, no one could get rid of them, but, on the contrary, we know that everybody can get rid of them, so, it proves that true nature of the soul is not the same as the mental condition. Ordinary psychologists of the West do not go to that state and, therefore, they think that the soul is the same as the mind and if you speak to them about going beyond thoughts, they think it will be just like committing suicide, so they cannot do it. But, I say, go on and try a little, try to separate your mind from your soul, have patience, and see the result. It is a great fun to see how the mind has been deluding you for so long. Get out of that delusion and try to see these things clearer, because they are the attributes of the mind. If you get rid of them, you do not get rid of the true nature, you do not lose anything, but gain the knowledge of your true Self.

Therefore, in that state of *samadhi* which is described as steadiness in the knowledge of the Supreme, all earthly desires are subjugated, you become still and all other thoughts die out. And that is the reason why they try to stay in that state of *samadhi* forever, and when they do come down, they dedicate their life for the good of others. "Whose heart is not distressed in calamities, and from whom all longings for pleasures have departed and who is free from earthly attachment, fear and anger, such a one is called steady, he has divine knowledge".⁷ Calamities may be of different kinds. Something may

दुःखेषु द्विप्रमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥२१५६

Madhusudana Sarasvati says:

‘सराग-विषयनिवृत्तिः स्थितप्रज्ञस्य लक्षणम्’ ।

happen to the body ; there may be some kind of pain or disease, or these may be fear of the storm, or of the water, or we may lose our position, etc. Under all these circumstances the mind of a man in *samadhi* is not distressed, but distress may come for the time being like a flash of lightning and it passes away quickly. He (*sthitaprajna*) may have longing for temporary things, but that longing is not as binding as the longing of a worldly person. He may desire this or that, but the next moment he desires something opposite. Ordinary people may think that he is like a mad man or a maniac and that his mind is not steady in his ideas. But the standard of a realized man is not the same as the standard of an ordinary worldly man.

If you go to India, you will find that these great sages appear like mad man.^{*} No sane person would ordinarily act as they would, but still they are the most sane persons in the world. They do not care for what other people would think of them. They do not put on a garb outside and do things in a different way, and whatever they do, do freely, undisturbed by any kind of worry.

Ordinary people, if they feel pain, or are suffering, think what a calamity it is, what a great sin or punishment it is and how can they get rid of it? But a wise man, even under the extreme calamities, does not say these things, and does not feel them. Sometimes these wise ones, in order to rouse sympathy of others, say that they are ill. They say these things not for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others. Only to rouse the feeling of sympathy in others, or in the disciples, they do that sometimes. If they constantly remain in that state, those who are with them, will become hard-hearted in the end, so, in order to help them and bring out their higher qualities and feelings, they do that, but, in fact, they are above all these distresses and worries of ordinary people.

I lived with a great sage in India. Sometimes his disciples would go to him and ask him to go to the theatre, and he would go. Why should he go? He would take some of his disciples and explain certain things and show the transitoriness of those things. Sometimes he would do that just to satisfy

^{*} It has been mentioned in the Hindu *Shastras* that the *sthitaprajna Jivanmuktas* live in this world like the *unmatta*, or *pishācha*, or *vālaka* -ones (*unmattavat*, *pishāchavat*, *vālakavat*, etc.).

the disciples, and because they wanted him to go, he went. He would not do it for his own sake at all. Ordinary people would say, such a great sage going to the theatre, what kind of a sage is he? It was his nature and they did not understand it. The sages act like ordinary persons, but their ideas are different. They do not seek them, or love them. They can stay without them forever, still they have certain ideas and try in some way to satisfy the desires of others in a certain way, and they do it. They have no fear or anger, but at the same time they do not wish to be imposed upon by others, just as in the story of the saint and the snake.

There was a snake and that snake was very vicious. He used to bite and kill every one that came near him. There was a sage, and he came to bite the sage, but was stopped by his wonderful powers and the snake could not come near him. The sage then told the snake not to do such things. The snake asked what he would do, and then the sage said, he should be mild gentle and not hurt any one. So the snake stayed by the road side in his hole and would not disturb or hurt any one, and the street boys used to throw stones at him and he would not do anything, and he would only suffer. After a few days the sage came back and found the snake in a miserable condition. He asked him why he had brought such a miserable condition upon himself. The sage said: "I told you not to bite, but I did not forbid you to hiss". So hissing is not bad, rather is necessary.

Ordinary people may think, why should the sage do that? It is anger. They do not know. If a sage is going to satisfy all the foolish people around him, he will be dead. He does not do that, but he is free from all attachments and is free from fear and anger.

'He who is unattached to the things and who sees both good and bad in all things being unaffected in the least, is one, whose knowledge and wisdom are steady'.⁹ There is good in everything and also something bad in everything. Some people try to see good in everything and some try to see what is bad in everything. Whatever you call the most wicked thing, has

⁹ यः सर्वज्ञानमिहस्नेहस्तत्तत् प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।

नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२॥५७

some good about it and you cannot help admitting it, but a sage who has gained highest knowledge or wisdom and whose mind is steady upon or is attached to the Supreme Being, is of the highest nature. This attachment which we have to the things of the world, should be turned towards the Supreme. Make that attachment stronger than it was before. Direct that attachment to the Supreme and it will be stronger. If the river is flowing towards the east, turn the course and make it flow towards the west. Instead of letting the desires flow towards the world, let them flow towards God, and that is the easiest way. Ordinary people do not understand how it can be done. Just hold that ideal in mind. Direct all your thoughts, good or bad, towards that one Ideal. And that ideal must be in touch with the Divine, and it cannot be an ordinary ideal. When your mind is in that condition, you do not seek the presence of other persons. When some great thing is given to you, you do not feel elated, or highly honoured, or respected, but treat it as all right. When something not so pleasant comes, the wise man does not hate the thing so badly, but his hatred or dislike will be different from that of other people of the world. When something wrong is done to such a man, he will always forgive the offender. Amongst your friends if you say something wrong to one of them, he will turn an enemy to you, but when you do and say many things which are wrong to one who is wise he will not take offence, for he understands the human nature, knows the faults, and is ever ready to forgive them in spite of all the insults that have been done against him, and that is the difference. He does not speak ill of others, nor does he admire others in the worldly sense. This is the answer to the question: "What does he say?" He speaks always seeing the good and divine side in the individuals, and he treats them always with the feeling of mercy, kindness, and unselfish motives.

At the time of *samadhi* he withdraws his senses from the objects of the world, just as a tortoise withdraws his limbs when it is frightened, he goes within his shell and outside things cannot disturb him, as they cannot disturb a tortoise when it has withdrawn all its limbs within its shell¹⁰ So to a wise one,

¹⁰ यदा संहरते चार्यं कमौऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२॥५८

when he has withdrawn everything within himself, the world does not exist and nothing can disturb such a man. He can come out and stay and at that time he may show that he is disturbed by the slightest thing, but that is not his nature.

The objects are withdrawn from an ideal man of the type, but the taste does not. If one has lost his eye-sight, you know that he longs to see again, just as a deaf person, after many years of good hearing, longs every second of his life to hear again. He cannot forget the taste. An ordinary person who is living a kind of artificial life or is diseased, dumb or deaf or blind, may not have the objects of senses and may not enjoy them, but, at the same time, the taste is there. The blind man may not enjoy a good colour or a beautiful sight, but his desire is there, and that desire for taste we can get rid of only by realizing the Divinity. In this way, we can conquer the taste of the external objects.

When you are trying to control your senses i.e. the power of seeing hearing, smelling, etc. at the time of meditation, you may struggle hard, but you must know that even the wise ones, in spite of their most powerful efforts, are forcibly dragged down to the sense plane. When you are trying not to hear any sound, the slightest sound will disturb you. It is very difficult to control these senses and the mind, because the mind is the governor of the senses. The best way is to govern the mind instead of being governed by the mind, and, therefore, we should do our best to restrain the senses and never let them get the better of us. As the most powerful robbers can rob even when the master is wide awake, so the senses like the robbers drag the mind to the external world and make you attached to these things and bring about all the unhappy and unpleasant results in the way of desires, thoughts, etc. Therefore, having gained perfect control over the senses, try to fix your mind on the Divinity. "He who has controlled his senses, sense-powers, and mind, is the one whose knowledge is steady. He is steady in that knowledge, but you can accomplish it only when you have succeeded in controlling these most powerful enemies, and then you will understand the manner in which the steady-minded one sits.

He sits as the master of himself and the world, and he is the light of the world".¹¹ If you have withdrawn your mind en-

¹¹ Vide the *Gita*, II. 58, 64.

tirely from the world, you have become the light of the world, you do not have to die and you become the light of the world after death by the grace of the Almighty. But you can do that even in this life. Just withdraw your mind and live in the midst of your environments, but at the same time, be above it.

By withdrawing the senses like a tortoise, controlling the mind and rising above thoughts and ideas and being in union with the Divinity which is dwelling within you, remain for a little time every day. This process is known as meditation. This meditation should be the first and the last thought in your every-day life, and everything that is done in the daily life between the first and the last will be temporary. When you have succeeded in holding that thought of meditation, you have gained wonderful powers. You do not know what powers you will get by meditation. Just go on doing this for a few months or years. Go on keeping up the practice, and you will see the results in time. Do not be anxious, because you cannot meditate, or fix your mind, or withdraw your senses in a day or two. You should not think of the results, but go on doing it as you are told, and in time you will find that which you cannot do today. Through that simple practice you have accomplished after a few months some wonderful results. It is a wonderful thing to keep on, and that will make you rise step by step. You may not think you are rising in the process of evolution, but if you look backward five years and see what you were and consider what you are now. You will find that you are making progress steadily. You will gain knowledge by degrees. What you cannot accomplish today, you will do after a time easily, and what is most difficult, will be easy through practice.

CHAPTER IX

SELF-MASTERY OR SELF-CONTROL

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the last few verses of the second chapter treat this subject of self-mastery or self-control. You may remember that Arjuna asked about the nature of the wise man, who has attained steadiness in knowledge, and he asked four questions. One of the four questions was: "How is he spoken of by others?" Here we once more refer to the third question, "How he sits and how he moves". The answers to the first three questions we already heard. The other, the fourth, remains to be answered. In answering the third about how he sits, Sri Krishna says that one who has attained to that wisdom and whose mind is steady and firm in self-knowledge, sits in perfect calmness, tranquility, and peace. His senses are subdued and his mind is under his own control. He withdraws his senses from the objects of senses. If there be any sound he does not hear it (for he centres his power of hearing over the soul), his eyes may be wide open, but he does not see any object, because he withdraws the power of sight.

You will also remember the illustration of the tortoise who, when he is frightened, draws his limbs into his shell, so the wise man, when he sits in *samadhi*, should have that power of the mind. The senses are going out into the external world, and become connected and attached with it. He does not smell at that time. If any one touches his body or limbs, he does not feel it. He is just like a corpse for the time being, but he is not in a state of trance, or in a mediumistic condition. He does not feel anything in connection with his physical body or senses, which are connected with the external objects of senses and that is the way he sits.

The powers of the senses to see, to hear, etc. are great. They drag the mind out to external objects and not to the inner Self,¹ and it is the most difficult thing to control them.

¹ In the *Katha Upanishad* (II.1.2), it has been said:

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयम्भूस्तस्मात् पराङ्मन्यति नान्तरात्मन्, कश्चिद्धीरः
प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षत् ।

Those who have been practising concentration, would feel it.² These senses are so powerful that, even when you are trying to control them, they will not obey you, because your will-power is not strong enough to command these forces. They are like the greatest enemies who rob you of that power of attention which you are trying to fix upon the highest Ideal. Therefore, referring to these senses, Arjuna said: "You must sit, having your mind fixed on me, intent on me and steadfast, because he whose mind and senses are subjugated, is steady in wisdom, or in self-knowledge".³ If your mind and senses are not under your own control, you cannot think of the Supreme Ideal. Your mind will be on the plane of this world. You will think of all the objects of senses and all the things you have been doing during the day time. The memories of the works done and the thoughts you have gathered during your work, will come up at the time of meditation and concentration, you will not succeed in concentrating your mind.

Not only this, but you will be thinking of the things you have done during the past days and the things you did a few days ago, or a few months ago, or a few years ago. All these will come up and distract your attention when you are trying to think of the higher Self, or the Supreme Spirit. You may find some picture that has come up before your mental eye, that is something you have done or thought of or seen or felt, and that will put you into thinking. When the picture is before your mind, you will begin to think about it and that contemplation will produce a kind of attachment to object of your thought.

Again, ordinarily if you think of anything which you have seen during your walk in the street, you have seen some good picture in the store, you have come home and are trying to sit quietly in meditation, and your mind will be on that picture which you saw in the store. You will be thinking of that picture, and that thought will bring an idea to your mind to possess that picture, and if you like it, you will like to possess

² यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विवपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥२।६०

³ तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।

वशे हि यस्योन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२।६१

it. That kind of attachment will be produced by contemplation of the object. From that attachment will come the strong desire to get it and you will make an effort, and if that effort be frustrated by something, or if anything comes in between you and the picture to prevent you from getting possession of it, you will become angry. So you see that from the thought of the object of senses, attachment comes, from attachment desire rises, and when that desire is frustrated, that desire takes the shape of anger. From that anger rises delusion, you get self-deluded and forget everything. Your mind at that time is in such a terrible state of vibration that you do not remember what you are doing and to whom you are talking, then you forget and lose control over yourself.⁴

We have noticed in many persons that when they are angry, they do not remember the relation which they bear to other persons and relatives, and they will say something disagreeable to their parents or spiritual teachers. By losing this insight into things, they lose the sense of right and wrong, and gradually, there happens in them the loss of memory. They lose the power of understanding and discriminating whether it is right or wrong and whether they ought to see these things or not. When this loss of understanding comes, there comes also the ruin of the person for the time being. A person, in the state of extreme anger, has lost absolute control over himself and is not fit for anything for any higher ideal, or higher contemplation and meditation, or any other higher thought, and, consequently, in that miserable state, he cannot expect to have self-knowledge or contemplation on the Supreme One. Therefore we must try our best to control our mind and senses.

Self-control (*atma-samyama*) consists in the control of senses as well as in the control of mind. The mind must be kept under absolute control. It should not be allowed to think of these objects of pleasure, or the object of senses, and this you should practise almost all the time, if you can, during the

⁴ ध्यायतो विषयान् पंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥

क्रोधात् भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥२१६२-६३

works of your daily life. If you can get an opportunity, you must exercise this power of control over your own mind, and you can do that in various ways. Make an experiment on yourself when your mind is thinking of something very pleasant and try to withdraw your mind and fix it upon something different. When a disagreeable thought comes to your mind, think of something higher and uplifting. You can do that when walking in the street, or sitting in your own room, or even when talking with other persons. You can practise that, and gradually through that practice you will gain the power over your mind. And that power is absolutely necessary in order to gain progress in wisdom, or in self-knowledge.

Our natural tendency is to seek pleasure from external objects, and to avoid pain. The things which bring pleasant feelings in us, we like, and those which do not, we dislike. So, this love and hatred you will find in your dealings with external things. You love certain things, and try to get away from certain things. For instance, take some colours. Some you do not like and others you like. Every individual has undoubtedly some favourite colour. Every individual likes some kind of music, which may not be liked by another person, and what another person likes, you, may dislike and this is the variety of tastes which is to be found everywhere and in every individual. You will see that feeling of like and dislike, love and hatred everywhere. So, what you like, you wish to keep always and have it in touch with you, and other things which you dislike, you wish to shun and avoid. But a wise man is he who does not cultivate these feelings, because those feelings are temporary and they proceed from temporary conditions of mind and depend upon the mood of persons.

When the mind is in a certain state of vibration, you like a certain thing which you dislike at another, and the same things you like at one time and at another will give you pain or make you unhappy. So the wise man says that pleasure and pain do not come from external objects, but depend entirely upon your mental condition. When you try to control the mental condition, you do not dislike or like the things outside of yourself, but these things always have the same nature and produce the same feelings and sensations in us. So a wise man does not seek pleasure or tries to avoid pain from external objects, but

tries to control the mental conditions. A wise man knows that the external objects of senses are not the source of pleasure and pain. So having perfect control over his own senses, he goes about in the world and remains undisturbed by the things which he sees or hears. He can enjoy anything which he wishes to enjoy. Anything which is most disagreeable to others, he (a wise man) can put up with and can enjoy that for the time being, because he is the master of himself. Ordinary persons of nescience will be disturbed and annoyed, but a wise man will go through all these conditions and yet retains his calmness, peace, and tranquility of mind, because his mind and senses are under perfect control, and that is one of the convincing signs of one who has attained to wisdom.⁵ There is, therefore, much difference between one who is constantly thinking of getting pleasure from external objects and one who has learned the secret of self-control and that of pleasure, pain and unhappiness. True happiness does not come from the contact of our mind with external objects, but it is a state which will be described in the next verse. It is a peaceful state of mind where there is neither love, nor hatred, neither like, nor dislike for things. If you can remain undisturbed by the most disagreeable thing you can think of, then you just know that you have gained a little control over yourself. You can make experiment and see how far you have advanced in gaining control over your own mind and senses.

A wise man moves about among the objects of senses free from love and hatred and absolutely controlled by his true Self. This is the way he moves. If one asks how he moves in this world, we are to say that he moves in this world keeping this tranquil state and under absolute control. He can go through the streets, his friends may pass, and he may not see them. He can go about and mix with people who are enjoying different kinds of talks and conversation. He may see the sights perhaps, but he does not take notice of these things, because his mind is on different things or levels, he takes a different view, or studies human nature, and get suggestions which help him in attaining knowledge in connection with the Supreme Ideal.

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।

आत्मवश्यै विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥२॥६४

Why should we try to move in this way keeping our mind free from love and hatred? Because, if we love anything, any object or colour or sound, we will be put into that state of thinking, and when we begin to think of it, we will try to enjoy it, get possession of it, and become attached to that particular thing. If such be the condition how deeply attached are those who are constantly enjoying the objects of senses. Those who are living in the world without thinking of self-control and without trying to gain control over their bodies and mind, are strongly attached to everything connected with the bodies and with themselves. How strong that tie is and how difficult it is to cut that tie. Very few can think of it. Unless you try to live long for a time in a quiet place, you cannot kill it. You are in a current constantly flowing. You cannot control that current, you cannot get out of it, and you do not know where you are going. That state is one in which the majority of people are living. But when you have gained control over your mind, you gain peace, tranquility and restfulness. When that state of peace comes, all misery and suffering and sorrow end, because in that state you do not think of anything of the external world, and your mind is on a higher plane. Then your mind is above the sense plane, hence, that which exists on the sense plane cannot disturb you. All that you see, hear, and perceive with the senses, are on the sense plane and, when you have shut yourself in and when you have withdrawn your sense powers from the objects of senses and thus you have cut off all connections with the external world, you are absolutely alone. Then you are in your own closed doors (with all the windows shut). This closet is the body and the doors are the senses and you have now fixed your attention upon your highest Ideal within yourself and, consequently, you overcome sorrow, suffering, misery, and everything.

In that peaceful state of mind, the power of understanding is well-settled upon your true Self, and Self-knowledge becomes steady. Then all kinds of doubt and wrong idea in connection with the Ideal, stop. Then all great obstacles in the path of progress cease to be, and when they all stop, your mind is well-settled upon the Ideal, and until that happens, your mind is in constant anxiety and worry, and is disturbed.

One whose mind is disturbed in this way, cannot sit in

contemplation (*dhyana*), because the sense powers are extremely strong, and they draw the mind on. Thirst for pleasure becomes very powerful and the mind seeks pleasure from external objects. So he who is not self-controlled, has not got control over intellect and understanding and, consequently, the mind cannot be fixed upon the Absolute, or upon the Abstract and, when we cannot think of the Absolute, or the Abstract, we must not expect to have true happiness and freedom. True happiness and freedom are that state of mind in which there is no desire of any kind, no thirst for anything, no doubt, no anxiety, and no worry, and then the mind is steady upon its Self, or the soul is steady in its own knowledge and glory. That state is very rare. But when the mind is disturbed with anxiety and worry or thought of objects of senses, it is a state of unhappiness, misery, and suffering. So we must try to control that state.

The mind which yields to the roving senses, carries away wisdom and knowledge of Self, as a wind carries away the ship which is on the waters. When you are trying to sit in meditation, or trying to fix your attention upon the Supreme Ideal, if your mind is not under your control and if it follows the dictates of the sense powers, your mind will be, as I have already said, taken astray from the path. If you are trying to think of yourself as the Spirit, or the Absolute, remember that it is the source of consciousness, intelligence, and bliss. If you forget that Ideal, some thought of the departed spirits will come to your mind perhaps, or if your mind is attracted by some pleasant sound or music, you would forget that you were thinking of your supreme nature, or of the source of intelligence, peace, and existence, and for the time being there would be a gap in concentration. You will have to bring your mind back from that state into the Supreme ideal. Every individual will find it very difficult to get control over the mind and the senses, but if he let the mind go and follow these senses entirely, then there will not be contemplation or meditation at any time. Therefore, he who has succeeded in bringing the senses under the control of the mind, not letting the mind be under the control of the senses, attains highest wisdom. He who has succeeded in bringing the sense powers and in withdrawing them from the objects of senses, gain steadiness in wisdom, or

Self-knowledge.⁶ Self-knowledge is a thing which makes you feel that the world of senses is like a dream.⁷ It is like a dream when you come to think of the real state. Of course, when you go to the extreme limit of your sensation, perception, thoughts, and ideas that rise in the mind, you will see that you have been dreaming for so long. Think of all the experience you have gathered in your life. Do they not seem to you like dreams? Whatever you have done, or seen, or felt, where are they now? You saw many things in your dreams those have passed away. So, in your waking state, whatever you saw, or felt, have also passed away leaving a few impressions upon your mind, and when you try to think of them, they come up into your mind in the forms of ideas, just as these things you saw during your dream state. What is the difference then?

You say these are real. When you are dreaming a dream that is real for the time being. It becomes unreal when you wake up, and compare the dream state with the waking state, but; so long as you are dreaming, the dream is a reality. When you felt those sensations and experienced these things, they were real, but now they have passed away like a dream.

The wise man lives in a state that is like night to ordinary persons. When it is night to a worldly-minded person, a wise man is awake, and when the worldly minded people are awake, the wise man sleeps and that is night to him.⁸ The Supreme Reality of the universe is like night to worldly-minded people, because they do not think of this Reality. There is a veil that covers that Supreme Reality from our knowledge, or power of intellect, or understanding. They cannot penetrate that veil. It is absolutely dark to them, just as dark as the darkness of night. It appears like night, because the state of

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तस्माद् यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥२।६८

⁷ Dream appears unreal in comparison to the waking state. The world of appearance which is ever-changing and fleeting, is not permanent and is, therefore, unreal in comparison to the permanent reality, the *Atman*.

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या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥२।६९

ignorance is compared to darkness. What we do not know, is like night to us, and where we are living now that is on the sense plane and it is like daylight. Those who are living on the sense plane, are awake in that state, but the wise man does not live there and, consequently, it is like night to the wise man.

A crane, or an ordinary bird, is awake during the day time, but an owl sleeps during the day. That which is night to a crane, is day-time to an owl, and that which is night to an owl, is day-time to an ordinary bird. So there is the difference between a worldly-minded man and the wise man. The worldly-minded man enjoys certain things, just as a crane would enjoy during sleep, and when the wise man enjoys, the worldly-minded man sleeps. The Supreme Spirit is like night to the worldly-minded man, and the objects of senses are in the state of darkness to the soul of a wise man, which is absolutely concentrated upon the the Highest Spirit.

As water runs into the ocean and the ocean does not change its level, so when all desires will run into the Self of the wise man and run undisturbed or unattracted under all circumstances, then will come that state which is described by the words, peace, tranquility, and calmness.*First, you will have to have all your desires fulfilled, and when your desires are fulfilled, withdraw these desires from the objects of desires and concentrate them upon the Highest Ideal. Let all desires go towards that, and do not let them come out towards different things, but have that one centre towards which, like the radii of a circle, all these different desires and tendencies will converge, and then will come that state of peacefulness restfulness, tranquility, and happiness. But a person whose mind is scattered in different ways towards the objects, cannot get that state of happiness, cannot get peace, and cannot get tranquility So it is very difficult for such persons to gain steadiness in knowledge, because the worldly-minded persons have not gained control over their senses and mind.

Abandoning all the desires for external things and objects if you can sit quietly thinking of the Supreme Being, and being

* आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत् कामा यत् प्रविशन्ति सदैव स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥२॥७०

free from the senses of 'I' 'me' and 'mine', then you have attained peace.¹⁰ The senses of 'I', 'me' and 'mine' are only true in a relative sense. As long as you are connected with the things of the world and your surroundings, so long this senses of 'I', 'me' and 'mine' are true, but when you withdraw your mind and attention from all these things, you forget yourself, and you cannot gain anything, even your own children will appear to you as the children of God. Really they are not yours and you have not produced or created them. The soul has not created these children, and your soul is the child of the Supreme Spirit. So it is with the souls of your children and relatives. Therefore how can you claim these children or the things which you possess as yours? They belong to the universe and not to you.

So the senses of 'I', 'me' and 'mine' will die out entirely, and when they are dead, and if you can kill that once, you can have the senses of 'I', 'me' and 'mine' as related to the Supreme, and not as separate individuals. Then all the things which you possess will appear to you as trivial and will lose their attraction. You may think that you are losing interest in different things, but is it worth-while to have that interest in these transitory things? The people of the world will say that you are going astray, because you are getting rid of them and are on a path which they cannot reach and to which they do not want to go. So you will have the world against you, and cannot wait to reconcile yourself with the world, as long as the world will come and call you by names and you cannot stop their talks. Let them say whatever they wish to say, but you have the Highest Ideal within yourself. No one has ever become great in following the so called public opinion. The fear of public opinion is the greatest fear that we have. As long as you are living in society, you feel concerned about what others may say about you. Sitting in meditation, you are perhaps, looking around, thinking what others will think of you. Remember that no one has ever succeeded in gaining the Highest Ideal in life, thinking what others may say, therefore, one should try to be alone for some time every day.

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विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरद्वन्द्वारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥२।७१

Sit quietly not thinking of anybody. When you are trying to meditate, sit in a corner where nobody can see you. Begin in that way, do not let any body come near you and feel that you are alone and that no one is watching you. When you have gained perfect mastery over yourself, you will be able to sit in meditation for hours, even upon the street corner, without thinking what others will say or speak of you. When you will gain what is called the real strength of character, you will remain true to the Ideal. As long as you are fearing what others will say, you are not true to yourself, or to your Ideal, but you are only true to public opinion and that is all. Did Jesus the Christ think of what others would say of him? They are the really wise men who trample upon public opinion and never think of that, because, the public opinion of the worldly-minded people will not be worth-having. Leave this society and settle in another society and then the opinion will be quite different. In India, the public opinion is quite different from what it is here. What you like here, may be wrong to them, and what they like, may be wrong to you. In the different countries, the public opinion varies and do not let it influence.

Those who wish to attain to the Highest Ideal, will rise above details. When a wise man finds anything, or anything is given to him, he does not care for it. For the time being he may use it, but he has no feeling that he is possessing anything. When some thoughts or ideas come to his mind, he has the same undisturbed feeling. They cannot disturb peace and tranquility of his mind. And towards every one of all different impressions that are lying dormant, the wise man has the same feeling. When he earns his living (if he has to earn his living), he does it with the same feeling without attachment. He does not feel attached to his body, but, as long as the body is there, he does not want to throw it away. He rather wants to give some food or drink to his body. He has no particular longing for any particular food.

At present we are slaves to our bodies. We feel that we must have this kind of food and drink, we must have these kinds of clothes, we cannot go out without this kind of hat and this is foolishness. We make slaves of ourselves when living in society and we have no freedom. How can we expect to have freedom when we are obeying so many masters? We are slaves

to public opinion. People will say: "You are wearing a hat which was in fashion three years ago, and that is not right". But he who is free from the feelings of 'I', 'me' and 'mine', does not pay heed to these foolish opinions of others. Let them say whatever they wish to say, but it does not affect their minds. Words are nothing but vibrations of air that enter into our ears, and pass away. Why should they produce any irritating effect upon our souls? If you make yourself so weak and negative as to be affected by any low vibration of air, there is no hope for freedom or any high achievement.

So, this is the way a wise man moves in the world, and this is the answer to the fourth question, how he moves. This is the spiritual state of communion of the individual soul with the Supreme Spirit. The individual soul transcending all these limitations and different bondages and ties, rises above the physical and mental planes and rise above the senescence of 'I', 'me' and 'mine', and, becoming absolutely free from all these limitations, enjoys perfect felicity.¹¹ In that peaceful superconscious state of spiritual bliss, man becomes free from birth and rebirth, and attains to the highest goal of life after death.

In that supreme state of freedom, there is no fear. All fear proceeds from selfishness. If you want to hold yourself to a certain point and to have certain things for yourself, but you do not have them, you feel disturbed. Whenever you find a disturbing element, you cannot avoid fear, but if you have no attachment to anything and do not want to hold yourself to any particular point, or have no special like or dislike for anything, you have no fear. In this world, if you are craving to so many different things, do you think you will be able to be free from the fear of death? We have heard "cowards die many times before their death". So we are already dead from fear of public opinion. Can there be any state more miserable than this? A wise man sees this and tries to get away from this. Renunciation does not mean throwing relatives out into the street, but a wise man wants to get away from all limitations.

¹¹ एषा ब्राह्मीस्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।

स्थिताऽस्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥२।७२

Regarding it, Anandagiri said: 'सर्वकर्मसन्नधासपूर्विका ब्रह्मनिष्ठा' ।

Can there be any happiness or pleasure compared to that which proceeds from perfect freedom? There cannot be. You may go anywhere and may live with any class of people, poor or rich, but it will not make any difference. If you have to live on bread and butter, it is very good. You do not live to eat, because food is only for the support of the body, and that body can be supported easily on bread and butter. A wise man knows this, and so he enjoys it under whatever circumstances he is placed.

Read "*The Song of Sannyasin*", written by Swami Vivekananda, and there you will find how this wise man lives. A wise man does not build any house, he travels in different countries, and he sleeps comfortably in any place and any food pleases him. Many of the American people who live in hotels, are like the wise men of the East. They have no household cares. Jesus the Christ had no home. If they can gain control over their mind and senses, then they have succeeded in getting that peace and happiness.

It is not that we wish to be completely free from the bonds of home-life, but the ideal is to gain that peaceful, restful and tranquil state of mind, undisturbed by worry and anxiety. People who have no home-life, and live in hotels and boarding-houses, may often be extremely nervous. They are more unhappy than those who are in home life, but if they can get a little glimpses of the Supreme Self, they will be happy under any circumstances. And when you have once gained that happiness, you will never lose it, as it is your property. So we must try our best to gain that state of happiness and rest once in this life, and struggle hard, until we have attained it. Therefore it is said in the *Upanishad*: "Rise, awake, and stop not until that goal is reached".¹² Because the path is very difficult to go by. It is sharp like a razor's edge, and as it is difficult to walk on a razor's edge, so it is difficult to walk on this path of wisdom.¹³ We must not be lazy or unmindful of the things necessary on this path, and we must not be careless in our way

¹² उत्तिष्ठत, जाग्रत, प्राप्य वराण् निबोधत ।

¹³ क्षूरस्य धारा निशितादुरत्यया, दुर्गम् पथस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ।

—*Katha Upanishad*, I. 3. 14.

Vide also *Katha Upanishad* I. 2. 12.

of living. But we must try our best to have mastery over ourselves. We must control our mind and senses, and then, with that self-mastery, if we sit in meditation and contemplate the Highest Ideal, we will attain peace and happiness, even in this very life.

CHAPTER X

WORK FOR THE DIVINE BEING

The main object of this *Bhagavad Gita* is to describe the different paths of spiritual evolution of the soul. There are eighteen chapters, of which the first is introductory. We have already studied the second chapter and the rest we are going to study gradually.

In the whole of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the first thing we find, mentioned, is devotion to work i.e. to work without having any special attachment to the results. Ordinary persons will perform works, their daily duties of life and, at the same time, they should renounce the results and send them to God. These works should be done simply to please the Divine Being and to perform the daily duties of life, having no other motive or purpose. From this kind of work will come the purification of the heart (*chittashuddhi*). When the heart is purified, we get self-control i.e. control over our mind. Our mind becomes peaceful, and gradually the higher enlightenment comes after that dispassion comes to the devotee, or the seeker after truth. He renounces everything, nothing in the world attracts him, and everything seems to be transitory and ephemeral. They have no purpose and no value in regard to him. They are like toys.

As ignorant children amuse themselves with toys and think they are real, but give up their toys when they grow up in knowledge, so when that state of dispassion comes to the man of wisdom, there is no real value in life, or in the things of the world. When the mind is unattached to the objects of pleasure, then with the help of the teachings of Vedanta, true faith and devotion to the Supreme Being come to the soul. From that faith and devotion comes the real knowledge i.e. knowledge of the Self or knowledge of the Reality of the universe, and then all the obstructions that are in our path of spiritual progress, are removed and the individual soul is said to be free, even in this life. True salvation in this life is thus attained by the individual soul. That is,

he lives in the world, but he is not of the world. Sri Ramakrishna said that the boat goes over the water, but the water does not go i.e. enter inside the boat. He appears as one with the world, but his tendencies are different. Whatever he does, he does not do like an ordinary person. Then his is absolute resignation to the Almighty Will. He may eat, or walk, or talk, but that is nothing, as these things do not bind him, and he does not do these things for selfish motives.

In this state of salvation in this life, one continues to reap the results of the acts which have produced this body, and which have begun to produce these results, and after death, one attains to absolute freedom. Men of this type are not born again, and they are not subject to any of the laws. They reach perfection at the time of death, because their mind is not attached to anything, their desires are all fulfilled, and when they pass away, they pass into that state of super-consciousness (*samadhi*). But, before that state of salvation in this life can be obtained, there must be certain things or qualities which are called the divine qualities, and these must be encouraged. We should have these qualities in our character and, as long as that high state of realization does not come, the desire should be for the highest freedom and the attainment of perfection. All the lower desires should be given up and all the demoniacal tendencies should be overcome. All these things have been described in the eighteen chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The second chapter has been like the aphorisms which contain all the things that will be described from the third chapter to the eighteenth chapter. When we have studied the second chapter, we have got the seeds of all these things that will be described eventually in the following chapters.

In the first place, we are to work for the Divine Being and not for selfish motives. We should work for the service of the Almighty, and that work is described in the third and fourth chapters where Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga have been explained. When the purification of the heart is attained, all works and duties of life are done in spirit of worship and that particular state is described in the fifth and sixth chapters, where Sannyasa and Dhyana Yogas have been explained.

Discrimination regarding true nature of the individual Self is the highest motive or object. You know that the whole Vedanta philosophy can be described, in two simple words 'Thou art That'—*tattvamasi*. These three words 'Thou art That' cover the whole meaning of Vedanta. The word 'Thou' is the individual Self and 'That' is the Supreme Spirit, and 'Thou art That' means 'Thou art the Supreme Spirit'. But there are a great many difficulties in the way of realizing the Truth that underlies this short sentence, 'Thou art That'. First of all, we must realize the nature of the individual self and in the first six chapters of the *Gita*, discrimination (*viveka*) of the nature of the individual self has been explained and made clear.

In the second chapter, Samkhya Yoga, we have already learned that, in reality, the soul (*jivatman*) is immortal, eternal and unchangeable, and it is non-different from the almighty pervading Spirit. In the second six chapters, beginning with the seventh and ending in the twelfth ones, we find discrimination regarding the true nature of the Supreme Spirit or the all-pervading Spirit, to which the individual soul should be devoted. In the last six chapters, we find the result of discrimination: how this individual self (*jivatman*) can be the same as the Supreme Spirit (*Paramatman*). The establishment of this self-accomplished fact 'Thou art That' is given in the last six chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita*, but, of course, in each of these last six chapters are the descriptions of the different Yogis and also that of the nature of different kinds of knowledge, etc.

In the second chapter, we have already seen that there are two paths, described by Sri Krishna: the path of devotion to work and the path of renunciation—Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga. You will, perhaps, remember that when Sri Krishna said: "To work thou hast the right, but not to the fruits thereof" (*karmanyevadhikar ma faleshu kadachana*), there he described the Karma Yoga or the path through devotion to work, and again when he described the nature of one whose knowledge is steady, in wisdom, there he does not mention anything about devotion to work, but he describes there that wisdom is the highest, and he also says that wisdom is greater than *karma*, "therefore take refuge in wisdom".

Again, in the last verse of the second chapter: "He who has attained to this knowledge and who possesses this knowledge, even during the last moment of his life, attains to the highest felicity of the Brahman".¹ By that he exalted the nature of one who had reached that state of realization, but at the same time he asked him to do the work, the duty, and to fight. This created a great confusion in the mind of Arjuna. He did not quite understand whether Sri Krishna, the master, really meant that wisdom was higher than work, or work was higher than wisdom, because at one time he exalted wisdom, and at another time he spoke highly of work. Arjuna's understanding being confused, he asked this question: "Is it thought by thee that wisdom is higher and greater than *karma*, the performance of all the duties of life, then why dost thou direct me for this terrible action? By thy apparently confused words, thou seemest to confound my understanding, tell me with certainty the way by which I may attain perfection".²

Arjuna was the disciple of Sri Krishna who was the master. The disciple asks the master as to which is higher: "Shall I plunge myself in this action, or shall I renounce all work and retire from the battlefield and live the life of one seeking the highest through the path of wisdom? What shall I do?" That is the point. He knows that Sri Krishna, the master, was not going to delude him as long as he was trying to correct his errors and remove the obstacles that prevented him from realizing the truth. His object was not to delude or create any confusion in the mind of his disciple, but still Arjuna's mind, being like that of an ordinary mortal, was confused. He did not quite understand what he ought to do, so he asked this question.

The master replied: "In this world, there is a two-fold

¹ एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थिताऽस्थामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥२।७२

² ज्यायसी चेत् कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनादन ।
तत् किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥
व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥३।१-२

path: that I have taught. Those who are going through the path of wisdom, for them wisdom is best and those who are going through the path of work, for them work is the best.”³ Nor does it mean that there are two classes of people, one class will perform the work and another class will never perform any work. Is that the idea? No, these two are for the same person, only in the different stages of spiritual evolution. In the first place, when the individual has not attained to that state of purification of the heart and is not perfectly fitted for self-knowledge, then, in that state, what shall he do? He cannot renounce the works, he must perform all the duties of life and continue to work. When purification of the heart is attained, the heart has become pure and the mind is ready to receive everything, not attracted by anything of this world or the next, then that person is fitted for absolute renunciation. Those whose minds are full of desires and minds are attached to the things of the world and who seek pleasure and comforts of life, for them work is the best path, and such persons will perform works until the time comes when their minds have outgrown all the attachments, tendencies, and desires. When the mind of a man has become free from all ties, he should not desist from performing work. If he continues to work just as an ordinary worldly person does, he will have to come back again and again and reap the results, and, therefore, he will not be able to transcend the law of *karma*. But if he performs the duties in life and is devoted to the Supreme Being and if the results of these works he can transfer to the Supreme Being, instead of seeking them for his own selfish motives, he will have the means of salvation in this life,⁴ otherwise all his acti-

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।

ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानं कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥३॥

यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥३॥

The word *yajna* here connotes the idea of worshipping God or Vishnu—‘यज्ञो वै विष्णुरिति’। Men are bound by duties of works—‘कर्मणा बध्यते जन्तुरिति’। and the *Vishnu-purana* says,

vities will produce bondage. This is a thing never discussed in Western countries.

The main point is study the law of *karma* and to find out the way by which one can transcend that inscrutable law. The true nature of the soul is always above all laws. It is never subject to the laws of nature, but as long as we are thinking of ourselves as creatures of nature and bound by nature, so long we are subject to these laws. The moment we have realized our true self as the Spirit which is above nature, we have really begun to transcend the laws of nature and, as the law of *karma* is in nature and not outside of nature. The law of *karma* is a part of nature and a fundamental principle of nature, so the soul or true nature of the soul, is above that law also.

But ordinary persons being subject to the law of *karma*, or to the laws of action and reaction—cause and sequence, must reap the results that are in the wheel of action, and they cannot get out of them. Desires will force or compel them to do certain works like instruments, which will produce certain impressions and these will remain dormant in the mind substances and become the seeds of natural desires, and these will force them to do other works,⁵ and so in this way the cycles of impressions, desires and works will continue. These cycles will roll on and on and there is no end to them. We cannot get out of this chain, but the only way to cut this chain is to become desireless. How can we do that? He can do it by directing the results of works to God. So Sri Krishna instructed Arjuna to perform without desire (of getting back the results).⁶

वर्णाश्रमाचारवता पुरुषेण परः पुमान् ।

विष्णुराराध्यते पन्था नान्यस्ततोषकारणम् ॥

It should be noted that in the epic age, household duties or conducts were performed according to *varna* (caste) and *ashrama* (orders of life like *chatra*, *grihastha*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyasa*), and Sri Krishna told Arjuna to do works according to the prescribed laws of the *shastras*.

५ न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु निष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥३१५॥

६ न कर्मनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽनुते ।

न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥३१४॥

Every time when you think of doing some charitable work, or good work, just think of the result and offer to God and say: "May this go to the Divine Being, may it not bind me, I do not want the result" Just give it as an offering to the highest Ideal. Then, if we keep this thought constantly before the mind, all works which we are performing in our every day life, will be a means of purification to our minds or hearts and will be the means of cutting this chain of *karma* or action and reaction and will help us in transcending this law of causation.

Some one may ask what was the way out of this *karma*? Sri Krishna said that there are two paths, one is the path of wisdom (*jnana*) and the other is the path of work (*karma*). By this I do not mean to say that the other two paths do not exist, but here I mention the two specially, the later on I will mention the others.

Many people who are tired of the routine works of life, think that these works are a source of great bondage and want to abstain from action entirely. There are many in India who try to be Sannyasin, like one who has renounced the work and does not perform any duties of life, and adopt the escaping policy which is not desirable. There are again many people who are not fitted for that kind of life, but take that life out of curiosity and, being tired of ordinary works of life, think if they can have an easy time without going through all the troubles and anxieties and worries of a business man, they will be happy, but Sri Krishna said: "By abstaining from action, one does not get freedom from action, and by mere renunciation one, cannot attain to the highest perfection".¹ Really a man cannot remain being abstained from works. He may not work outwardly with his organs (*indriyas*) but he works through his mind, i.e., he thinks the plans of many works in his mind, but lazily remain inactive in his practical life, which is deplorable. That kind of man can be known as

¹ कर्मैन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥३।६

The word *mithyāchāra* connotes the idea of *pāpāchāra* i.e. unjust and unholy conduct. The word *mithyachara* expresses also the idea of hypocrisy and avoidance of duty.

a liar, or a hypocrite,⁷ because he preatends the attitude of inactivity, but he thinks in his mind many things and designs mentally the plans of works.

Freedom from action means that state which has been described in the second chapter as the character of one steady in wisdom (*sthitaprajna*), whose mind and heart are concentrated on the Soul or *Atman*, who can stay in that absolutely peaceful state of mind and soul for a long time, and who has reached that state of perfection. One can easily become free from action by not doing that action. If you are in duty bound and do not do it, you will not become free from action.

One person has renounced the world and cut off all his family ties and relations and is living quietly like a hermit in some secluded spot. That person ought to reach perfection, but if he has not attained Self-knowledge, or Supreme wisdom, through renunciation, it will not bring perfection, but, on the contrary, one may live in the world and perform the daily works of life and if that man possesses wisdom or self-knowledge, he has reached perfection and not the hermit. This is a point we should clearly understand in order to study the Karma Yoga which is the law of action and reaction, or the law of cause and sequence.

The state of perfection means freedom from all actions, as the Soul or *Atman* is free from all actions. The true nature of the soul (*jivatman*) is not subject to activity. The soul is the knower, but the individual ego performs all these works, and this ego cannot become free from all laws until it has realized the true nature of the Spirit, until it has realized that individual soul is non-different from the Supreme Spirit of the universe. Why does it happen? Because, no one can remain absolutely inactive, even for a second. Being forced by the energies born of nature, one is bound to do some kind of work or other.⁸ So it is our nature to be active. The nature of the individual ego is to do something and that act may be intellectual, mental, or physical. When we stop the physical activities, the mental and intellectual activities continue. It is not that only the physical actions are actions, but the physical actions are only the grosser expressions of the finer activities

⁸ Vide the *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 5.

of the mind substance, or the physical activities are the counterparts of the mental activities.

First of all the finer activities begin, than these finer activities manifest in the form of grosser activities or physical work. But these powers are in the finer activities, which we cannot stop. During the eighteen hours of your waking state, for how many seconds can you stay without doing this finer mental or physical work? Not for a second, and perhaps it is impossible. So when all these activities are going on within you and when these finer works are subject to the law of cause and sequence—action and reaction, how can we avoid work?

When a man has renounced his social duties, he is not free from action and he is doing action in another form. But if he wishes to reach perfection by that kind of ordinary activities of mind and intellect, he will not be able to get it, rather he will require knowledge, wisdom, or realization of the true nature of the Self. So when we study our own nature carefully, we study our inner nature, the mind substance, and the tendency to do these works and we cannot help it. The energy is put within us; we are born with this energy for work or activity, and when we are forced from within or propelled from within, to do these works, we cannot help it, but we are bound to obey that force or power which propel us.

A man who has renounced the works and the duties of life and who has ceased from performing physical works and, at the same time, whose mind is constantly thinking of the objects of senses, that self-deluded man is a hypocrite.* If he is constantly thinking of works, and is not doing any business and does not earn money, he is a hypocrite. It is true that he is constantly thinking of money, but does not possess anything. The fact is this that all thoughts are in his mind, but he does not express these thoughts in actions and fulfil his desires. In such a case he has not renounced anything, but he is constantly in the ocean of activity and his mind is full of activity. He cannot renounce work until he has not done it.

* * * य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥३॥६

If one renounces the internal action, even that one is not bound to attain to that state of freedom, because his mind will continue to think of those things and will remain active, and these activities are bound to express themselves outwardly, but, on the contrary, one who has controlled the senses, or the sense organs, with the help of his mind and performs the works of daily life without being attached to their results, he is greater than one who is a hypocrite, or of a foolish conduct.¹⁰ So if one abandons the works of the senses and thinks of these works and the objects of senses, that person becomes a hypocrite and liar, but one who has controlled the organs of senses and performs the duties of his life without attachment, is a greater person, more advanced and ready for attaining the Self-knowledge.

So the mind of an ordinary person who has renounced all these works and is sitting quietly and thinking of these things, is in a terrible condition. If that person's mind be full of envy and hatred and who cannot be fully detached, it is better for him to go and work and get the results and fulfil these desires. So an ordinary and superficial kind of renunciation does not produce any good, and does not help in the path of progress, that is why Sri Krishna said: "Therefore, constantly perform your bounden duties, because work is greater than inaction".¹¹ Action is more helpful than inaction, and if you resort to inaction and sit idle you will not be able to support yourself and earn your living. How can you support your body and live and get the necessities of life, if you sit idle and live around here and there like a vagabond? That would not be the right way. Then all the vagabonds would have been great Yogis, and would have attained perfection.

The idea is that we should work constantly and earn our living by the best means and, at the same time, leave the results in the hands of the Almighty. Go on with your worldly life and do all the duties, but do not seek the results, leave all

¹⁰ यस्तुन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।

कर्मैन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥३॥७

¹¹ नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥३॥८

thoughts about the results perform the duties like a true soldier. Have patience, exercise self-control, and do not forget that all work is a means to an end. The end is freedom and realization of the Highest. The end is the self-knowledge, but that we shall acquire when our minds or hearts are purified. There are various methods through which that purification of the mind or heart comes, and it comes only when the mind is peaceful.

If you cannot succeed in your attempt to be patient under favourable surroundings, how do you know that you will be patient in the midst of unfavourable surroundings? No one has ever found conditions absolutely perfect, so shall we waste our time till we have not got perfect conditions? Who has ever got perfect conditions? Under these circumstances, what shall we do? Struggle hard and get what you want, and do not waste the present time, which is the most valuable time. We do not know at what time the soul may be separated from the body. You are perhaps thinking of doing something after the lapse of twenty years when you have grown older, or when your children are able to take care of themselves, or when you will see the faces of your grand-children, or when you get certain things of life. If you put off your highest duty in that way, you will never succeed, rather you will pass away before you have accomplished what you wanted. The wise man thinks of the present and makes the best use of the present. Have the courage to do what you wish to do right now and here. The wise man conquers conditions even when they are unfavourable. His object is to subdue them and keep them down under his feet and be the master. We should, therefore, struggle hard to be the master of our surroundings, otherwise how shall we succeed? Shall we lose this valuable time in being weak? No, we must try to master these conditions and will not wait until the time comes for milk and honey to flow around us. If we find thorns, we shall put on shoes.

This world is full of thorns, so be master of yourself. Putting on shoes i.e. shoes of patience, wherever you like to go you will be safe, you will walk upon hard ground or thorns, and your feet will not be hurt. When you can put on that kind of armour of wisdom, courage, resignation, and self-mastery, you can go anywhere in the world, whether the condi-

tions are favourable or not, and you need not care. Do not be lazy or idle. Do not depend upon others. Some people think if they can live on the charity of some persons and have a good time, they will be able to do good work and devote their life to it. We must not cease to perform our duties, and we must earn by honest means what we need and live a right kind of life, depending upon nobody. If we seek freedom how can we depend upon friends and relatives?

From the first verse to the sixteenth, you will find the discussion of how all action is performed, but the object of these verses is given in the nineth verse which reply to: "Those whose will is bound by this law of action and reaction, or of cause and sequence", etc. Wherever you may cast your eyes, you cannot find any being absolutely free from activity, and every one is bound by that law. There is only one state where we do not find that bondage and that is in the state of work for the service of the Almighty, without having attachment to the results. "Therefore, O Arjuna, perform the works without having attachment to the results".¹² If you cannot do this, you will have to be subject to the laws of *karma* and reap the results of your works, both here and hereafter.

In the ordinary daily works when you are cooking anything, you do not think, but you are cooking it simply to have the pleasure of eating that food. Give first your thought to the Almighty. All this result of cooking is not for your body, but let this result go first to the Supreme, because all the works of your body and mind depend upon the forces and energy which belong to the Almighty, or to the Supreme Power behind the universe. You have used them, so be grateful to the source from which they have come. Think of that source. All the mental and physical activities have come from that Supreme, and, if your ideal be the Supreme, be devoted at every moment to Him. Make your mind concentrated upon that Ideal and go on doing the normal works, and then you will find that you have become a different being entirely and not a man of the world, nor a woman of the world. You will never lose your temper or patience, and the purification of mind or heart is near to you, and you are sure to have it. So, when you

¹² तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ।३।९

cannot be free from activities, physical and mental in this life, you must perform the works, but with the purpose of offering the results to the Supreme.

"He alone has become free from all activities who rejoices in the *Atman*, who is satisfied with the *Atman*, and who is content with *Atman*, and for him there is no work, but he is above all work".¹³ Ordinary persons are not satisfied with their true Self, but they are satisfied with the works of their senses and sense-pleasures. They seek the pleasures and comforts of the body, but one who is satisfied with the *Atman*, does not seek pleasures and comforts of the body. He is content within himself, he has no other desire, he does not want to possess this or that, and he does not want to have all the luxuries of life, but his, whose heart and soul are concentrated upon the Supreme Self, or upon the true nature of the soul. He has neither any end, nor interest in anything that is done or not done. When one thing is done for him, it is all right, and when it is not done, it is also all-right ; it does not make any difference, and he has no interest. If anything is done or not done, he does not show any interest in it, nor is there among all these beings, any one he should resort to for any object of this world or of the next. He does not seek any help from any one, he is perfectly happy and contented, and he does not pray for anything, even to the Supreme Being, because he does not want anything.¹⁴ Prayer is only another form for expressing desire, but when your mind has risen above desire, why should you pray?

One who has attained to perfect self-knowledge and is contented and satisfied with the Supreme Self, or *Atman*, or the Divine Nature in us, is above all forms of worship, he has attained salvation in this life. Therefore you should perform all these duties of life as long as you are in this world. As long as you have not attained to that perfect realization, per-

¹³ यस्तु आत्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मवृत्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥३१७॥

¹⁴ नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥३१८॥

form the duties of life without attachment, and doing this kind of work and giving the results as an offering to the Supreme, you will reach the Highest. If you can perform these works without attachment to the objects, you will transcend the law of *karma* and become free even in this life.

CHAPTER XI

WISE MEN AND THEIR WORK

In the twentieth verse of the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* the subject is 'Karma Yoga', i.e. action or work. We must do our work with patience and perseverance. All the great men of the world and the wise men became great by their works they performed. In ancient India, there were kings who reigned over their kingdoms and had large fortune like kings of the present day, but they were not like ordinary kings, they were extremely wise. They lived in the world, but were unattached to the world. One of them was Janaka. He was a great sage as well as a king (householder) in ancient India.

You will also find that there were also great kings who were saintly in their character.¹ Perhaps, you will remember what King Janaka² said when a messenger boy came to tell him that the palace was on fire and the city was going to be burnt and robbed. He said: "If the whole city of Mithila be destroyed, I will not lose anything by it, and if the world be destroyed, the wise man does not lose anything by the loss of the world".

There were commanders-in-chiefs and greatest statesmen and politicians who were also sage-like in their character and had become sage-like through right works. Even if we do not have to work for ourselves, but in order to set an example, we should work. The great sages and great men and great chiefs did their works, although they had no need of doing the works. They did so only to set an example in the society.

¹ They were known as the Rājārshis

² कर्मनैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।

लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपद्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि ॥३।२०

Sankara said in the commentary:

“जनकादयः जनकाश्वपतिप्रभृतयः । यदि ते प्राप्तसम्यग्दर्शनास्ततो लोकोसंग्रहाय प्रारब्धकर्मतात् कर्मणा सहैव असंन्यस्यैव कर्मसंसिद्धिमास्थिता इत्यर्थः । ~ ~ लोकसंग्रहमेवापि लोकस्योन्मार्गप्रवृत्तिनिवारणं लोकसंग्रहः * * ।”

Wise men perform good works not for their own selfish motives or to gain anything, but for the welfare of mankind. They work for the sake of the world and not for their own sake, because, "whatever a great man performs or does, others do the same; whatever he sets up as a standard, the world follows."³ If the great kings and monarchs or leaders of mankind do not perform good works, their followers will not do any work at all. So the masters will have to do their work, not for any special motive, but to set an example,⁴ so that others will be able to do work and through work will attain the highest goal. We always follow the leaders, the masters, the great men, or the wise men. It is natural and we cannot help it. If there be a great leader in a society in any country, ordinary people will follow his example without questioning why he does this, or what reason he may have for performing such acts. Ordinary people faithfully follow the leaders. It is human nature, and thus shows the tremendous power that proceeds from great men. They can make the world move according to their will, because their will-power is so great and pure that it is recognised as one with the universal cosmic will. They harmonize their will with the Divine will i.e. with the cosmic will, and consequently, their power is tremendous. They are like a charm in the society, and whatever they do and wherever they go, they carry this charm with them and produce an atmosphere around them so that others are bound to follow, it

Sri Krishna, the great Incarnation of God, standing on the battle-field as the charioteer of the chariot of Arjuna, is telling the latter that he has nothing to achieve, yet he was driving the chariot in the battle-field. He said: "look at me, I have nothing to achieve in the triple or three worlds; I have nothing unattained that should be attained; I have nothing to struggle for, because, I have my desires all fulfilled. I do not

* यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।

स यत् प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकन्तदनुवर्तते ॥३॥२१

³ Sankara said that great men even observe ordinary domestic or sacred Vedic work as a duty and proof. Anandagiri said that in spite of their knowledge and wisdom, the great men perform work for the welfare of the society and also for setting a glorious example to the world.

want anything, yet I keep me engaged in action”⁵ I am driving your chariot, giving instructions to you, because you are afraid of the fight and your heart is overpowered with compassion, sympathy and what is called human sorrow. He is imparting courage, fortitude, and strength of character to him through these instructions. He was setting an example and he referred to that in the following words, ‘I am here, the example, look at me, I have nothing to achieve in the triple world, yet I am driving your chariot and doing all these works at every moment of my life: follow me’. You all may ask me why then he did all these works if he did not have the desire to gain anything for himself. What was the incentive for his works? Sri Krishna says: “If I do not engage myself in all these actions, my path of inaction will be followed by the people at large in all matters, they will abstain from works and abandon their duties and spend their time idly. What will be the result then? This world will be ruined if all people do not perform their duties in their daily lives, there will be great confusion in social orders”.⁶ Again he says: “I will be the prime cause of that great confusion and for the destruction of all these creatures; they will not accomplish anything or fulfil their desires and purposes of life. They will spend their time idly, which will mean destruction and ruin”.⁷

Here you must remember that as Abraham was an Incarnation of the Divinity amongst the Jews, so was Sri Krishna amongst the Hindus. He is worshipped even today as the Hindu Christ and when this Incarnation of God said: “If I do not work, the whole world will go to destruction”, he means to say that the Divine Being is constantly working behind everything. He is never at rest, not that He created the world in six days and has rested ever since. You will never

‘न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं श्रेष्ठ लोकेषु किञ्चन ।

नानव्याप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥३।२२

‘यदि ह्यहं न वर्तयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।

मम वर्तानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥३।२३

‘उत्सीदिषुरिमे लोका न कुर्या कर्म चेदहम् ।

सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥३।२४

find that idea in the Hindu scriptures. God's universal will power is always working. It is always active. If for a moment the will power stops, destruction will come and involution will begin. Evolution means constant activity and it is what we mean by the word, work (*karma*). If the forces of nature were not constantly at work and if God Himself, the knower and master of all these works or the projector of the universe, were at rest, where would the world have been? The whole world would have ceased to exist by this time.

So, constant work or activity is the condition of our existence, and it is the foundation of the phenomenal universe. The phenomenal world is in constant activity and that activity means work for action. Therefore Sri Krishna says: "I have nothing to achieve still I am working to set an example". The earth is constantly working on its axis, the sun is constantly moving in its own way, and so is the whole planetary system in action and there is no rest. When we have known this secret, how can we think of any state where there is absolutely no work of any kind? If there is no activity, then the whole society will go to pieces and human beings will not be able to earn their living. Even the act of eating would be impossible, if there were no activity in the world. So all these actions must be there, we must perform our duties, and we must do our allotted share of work.

Wise men perform their duties, although they have no duties. They take upon themselves the idea of duty in order to set an example, so that others will follow them. Further still one should not unsettle or befog the understanding of an ignorant person who is working for results, but, on the contrary, one should make that person do his or her duty properly, fulfilling it with devotion. He should perform such duties with great devotion and at the same time set an example, so that others who are otherwise desirous of obtaining their results and are attached to the results, will follow their example. The common people who wish to do good works for good results, or do some devotional works for going to heaven, or some charitable works for helping the poorer classes, thinking that these will help them in the end, should not be discouraged in their efforts, but should be made to do their works properly with faith and devotion, so they will get good

results, otherwise a suspicion will arise in their minds and they will give up their works and will not be of any use to the society or family and will not obtain the highest knowledge or wisdom. They cannot sit quietly in *samadhi*, and they are not ready yet. The only thing they can do, is good works and if we dissuade them from that particular path, they will do nothing, and they will waste their time idly, going to different places, amusing themselves in different ways, which will bring no good to their souls and to their society. They may be thinkable like this: "We are doing these works and getting these results and are doing that particular work for that particular result". All ordinary people have that kind of understanding and wise men should never unsettle that understanding which ordinary people possess, but, on the contrary, they should rouse their faith and devotion and make them do their works properly and in a better way, because their nature forces them from within to do works. And propelled by nature, people will do some works, either physical or mental, and the causes of these mental and physical activities are not outside of, but in us. Each individual soul is the centre of all forces that make the person active outwardly and mentally. Each individual soul possesses these powers and each must manifest them. These are called *gunas* or qualities. We are born possessing these different qualities or energies. These are of different natures. Some are animal in their nature, others are spiritual and moral. Some are helpful to the soul, others are degrading to the soul. So, there are some good and evil ways in which these qualities or energies manifest themselves, but we cannot help that. Each individual possesses both good and bad traits. There is not one in this world, possessing an absolutely good nature. We possess mixed natures i.e. the good and the bad are mixed in each one of us. In some, there is the preponderance of good and others have a preponderance of evil. In some, the desires for good are very strong, and in others, are very weak.

Certain people have certain desires; others have different kinds of them; but all these are the expressions of the forces, of which the individual soul is the storehouse. When these qualities or energies are acting or manifesting, or expressing themselves, we ought not think of ourselves as the doers or

actors, but we ought not identify ourselves with these qualities or energies. They are on the mental plane, or on the plane of intellect and they are the powers of the mind substance. But the true nature of the soul is above all these qualities or energies in the matter, and these qualities or energies are the manifestations, and when we identify ourselves with these mental and physical activities, we betray our ignorance and imperfection. Therefore Sri Krishna says: "Only those who are deluded, think they are working. All activities are wrought by the *gunas* or energies of nature, which proceed from nature. There is a difference between nature and the master, or the knower of nature, but the individual soul of an ordinary individual is a mixture of both the knower and nature, and they are not separated. Wise men can separate the knower from nature. The nature is constantly at work, but the knower of nature is not at work. He is of the same kind always, and is unchangeable."⁸

It is like shedding the light over nature and making it act and evolve and at the same time producing a reflection upon nature, and that reflection thinks of itself as the actor, or knower, or performer, or thinker, of each mental and physical work. We ought not claim these activities or energies of nature as our own. Those forces exist in nature and they are constantly producing their actions and reactions, acting and

‘प्रकृते क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।

अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥

तत्तद्वित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।

गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्ता न सज्जते ॥३१७-२८

Sankara said regarding these two slokas: “‘अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा’ कार्यकारण-सङ्घातात्मप्रत्ययः अहङ्कारः तेन विविधं नानाविधं मूढ आत्मा अन्तःकरणं यस्य सोऽहं, कार्यकरणधर्मा कार्यकरणाभिमानो अविद्यया कर्माणि आत्मनि मन्यमानः तत्तत्कर्मणामहं कर्तोति मन्यते ।”^{२७}

Regarding it Anandagiri said:

“कार्यकरणामेव विषयेषु प्रवृत्तिरात्मनस्तु कूटस्थतान्मैवमिति ज्ञाता तत्तद्वित् कर्मसु दृढतरं कर्तव्याभिमानं न करोति” ॥२८

reacting upon ourselves. But we ought to stand outside, as it were, and witness the activities or energies of nature.

A wise man is one who can distinguish nature from the knower of nature, or the knower of nature from energy. He who knows the division between energies and their functions, are never attached to their results. Those results are not achieved by the knower, but they are achieved by the energy of nature. The energies of nature produce the mental functions and powers of the mind substance, along with all the different impressions, ideas, thoughts, forces, and desires, and they gradually evolve and manifest themselves in various forms of activities. The sense activities are also in nature. The activities of the body are also in nature, just as we cannot claim the air which our lungs can hold as our own. So we cannot claim this energy of nature as our own. If we do it, we do it by mistake. If we say the air which we are breathing, is our own air, because it comes through our bodies and stays there for a short time, would not that be a mistake? If we say that the heat that is in the body, is my heat, or your heat, would not that be a mistake? If we say that the force of attraction that keeps the atoms and molecules together and keeps the body in shape, were ours, would not that be a mistake?

So all these sense activities and physical activities that we claim to be our, are not in reality our own. They belong to the whole universe, and we must know and realize this secret. Why should we identify ourselves with the changes that are produced by the energies of nature? It is but identifying ourselves with ignorance. But the wise man, who has learned to separate the true Self, or the *Atman*, from nature, never says that he is the worker or the doer, and, consequently, he never reaps the results of those activities. As long as we identify ourselves with those works and seek the results, the results are sure to come. But when we do not seek the results and we see that these forces have come from some common source and have produced these results, these results ought to go to the source from where they proceeded, then we become free from all attachments that keep us down on this plane of mundane existence.

Those who are deluded by the attributes (*gunas*) of nature, or the forces or energies of nature, cling to the actions or

functions of these energies, and the wise ones should not discourage or unsettle them in their understanding.⁹ He who has known the reality of all i.e. has known the reality that underlies the whole of nature, is like the burning power, or the heat of fire. There is one substance in the universe, and that possesses all these powers which we call nature.

The word 'nature' includes the aspects, physical, mental, and spiritual. These are the different expressions of different powers, but all these powers cannot exist independent of that one and unique substance which is the foundation (*pratisthā*) of the universe. That substance is unchangeable, and it is nameless and formless. It is the source of all consciousness. It is the essence of all kinds of individual existence. Now, you exist, I exist, the chair exists, the house exists, and all the creatures of the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the planets, all exist. But what is that common basis of that existence? It is like the one ocean, of which the special existence of different things are like waves. When we know this or that substance which is the foundation of all, we should not discourage those who are not ready for that kind of knowledge: 'न बुद्धिभेदः जनयेत्'

The ordinary people of the world, busy with their works and duties of life, cannot know this Absolute Being, and, consequently, they perform their works and duties with the desire for getting certain results. If we say, 'you ought not to do these things, you will not get any permanent results, you can never have these things, or attain to that knowledge of the supreme Being', they will not listen to it, rather they will spend their time idly, and you will frustrate their efforts to reach the highest goal of eternal truth, because they are incompetent to appreciate the truth. Therefore, the wise man

*प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढा सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।

तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान् कृत्स्नविज्ञ विचालयेत् ॥३।२९

Sankara said:

‘तान् मन्दप्रज्ञान् ‘कृत्स्नवित्’ स्वयं न विचालयेत्—बुद्धिभेदकरणमेव चालन् तन्न कुर्यात् इत्यर्थः ।’

Sri Ramakrishna also said in a different way that we should destroy no one's sentiment or mood. ‘कारो भाव नष्ट कर्चि ना’ ।

should not produce any doubt, or suspicion, or create, a kind of unsettlement of understanding of those ignorant people who are attached to the world to their bodies, senses, and minds, and are seeking the results of their actions. What will become of them? They will go on in that wheel of action and reaction, (*karmachakra*), reaping the results of their works, and will continue to be born again and again. The results of this life's work will come up in the next, and they will go on and on. The wheel or cycle of action and reaction—birth and rebirth—will continue. You must not think that this is the first or the last chance you have got to come to the world, but you have been here several times and will continue to come and go, and no one can escape it except one who has known the ultimate Truth, the *Atman*, and who has become free from all desires, attachments, and conditions, that bind us and keep us down on this plane of contingent mundane existence.

The wise man is one who has become free from that revolving wheel. Ordinary people will go on and on in that wheel of action and reaction, or cause and sequence, until they learn by experiences that this wheel is the greatest bondage of the soul. Ordinary people who have not learned it, cannot be forced to know it. No one can force another to become spiritual, but when the inner forces i.e. the forces of the inner soul have manifested their powers on the mental and physical plane and have brought results, and if that soul, by good fortune, be able to understand the law of cause and sequence, of action and reaction, and realize that it is a great bondage and source of misery, suffering, sorrow, and worldliness, then it is ready for emancipation from this wheel. Many people desire to stay on this earth and enjoy it, and if you ask them if they are going to die, they will not think of death, nay, they cannot think of their death. These people will come again and again, because they love and enjoy this plane of existence which is no other than a bondage.

The sign of our outgrowth is dissatisfaction, discontent and disgust with this plane of existence. When we have that discontent in our mind, we do not want to live here in this plane of phenomena. When the soul yearns for something higher and greater freedom from the bondage of nature, it is ready to become free from this wheel of action and reaction.

The ordinary soul, attached to the results, will go on getting the results and, if their minds are unsettled, they will be of no use to this plane or any other ones, and, consequently, the wise man should never produce any kind of doubt in the minds of those ignorant and worldly people. If they wish to become free from this wheel of action and reaction, birth and rebirth. Sri Krishna shows the way out of it.

This sort of work will be the source of bringing about emancipation to the soul from the bondage of nature. If work be performed for the sake of the Supreme Being, that will be the only means to get out of this bondage. Sri Krishna says: "Offering up all these actions with their results to me with a mind, fixed on the Spirit and being free from selfishness, perform these works and be free from the fever of attachment, or anguish."¹⁰ As long as we are bound to do these works and duties of this life, so long we cannot leave them or get away from them. We ought to perform these works, but always thinking that we are like devoted servants of the Supreme Being, and keeping our mind fixed upon the Spirit, which is the master of nature and never seeking the results. You have the daily duties of life, go on doing them and you have the results. If you have done your duties to the utmost of your ability, you will get good results, and if you do not get good results, though you have done your best, keep still and do not worry, but go on doing your duties to the utmost ability, at the same time thinking you are obedient to your master, and think of the Supreme Spirit at the time of work, and when the results come, offer these results to the Supreme Spirit, as they do not belong to you. This is the only way out of this wheel of action and reaction.

If we can live in this world performing our duties in this way, we shall never be unhappy or miserable, but will have constant peace and happiness in our souls. Being free from the hope of getting good results, why should we hanker after the results? Do your best, because you will have to do it,

¹⁰ मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूता युध्यस्व विगतज्रः ॥३।३०

विगतज्रः=शोकशून्यः ।

and you are bound to progress, but do it as a servant of the Supreme Being. A soldier is bound to obey the command of the general and does not think of anything else. He does his best and the results do not come to him. If he falls in the battle-field, that is the end of him. So we should work like a soldier under the command of the Great General of the battle-field of the universe. As the results of thousands of soldiers' fighting go to the General, so the results of all these works of our daily life, either in this life or in the next, will go to Him, the Supreme Lord of the universe, to whom we should offer our mental and physical works with their results. However trivial our works are, let the results go to the Supreme.

Fix your mind on the Spirit at the proper time and, if you can think that the energies (qualities) of nature are performing all these works and if you have that faith and can think in this way, let the results go to the source from which these forces and activities have started, and that will be just as good. It is only another way of putting the same thing or idea which a devotee or a lover of God has. The activities and the forces are the expressions of the cosmic will of the Supreme Being. If you do not believe in the Supreme Being, think of the philosophy of work and the results will be the same. Therefore, Sri Krishna said, 'go and fight, and perform your duties, but do not keep any hope in your mind that these are your works'. This is really difficult to do, but all the same. It is the best method of escaping and avoiding the consequences of our desires and also in progressing towards the goal of freedom. "Those who follow my advise and instruction and example, are liberated from the chain of action and reaction".¹¹ We must not find fault with the teachings or with the teacher, or the Supreme Being. Why should we blame the Supreme Being? We must rather blame ourselves, and it is our own *karma* that has brought us into this condition. We must bear that quietly and patiently at the same time. If we have that disgust and discontent with the present conditions, we must still make the best use of our time by acquiring the results of our works and offering them to the Supreme Being.

¹¹ ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः।

श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मूढ्यन्ते तेषां कर्मभिः ॥३।३१

You may not have faith in this law of action and reaction, and when a wise man says that there is this law in this world, you may not understand it, but take it for granted ; and when you take it for granted and afterwards think deeply of it and try to understand it clearly, you will know that it is so. Or, if you ask the master, or a wise man, about the reason behind the Truth, he will explain it to you. You then accept it, understand it, and follow his teachings.

This kind of faith is not blind faith (ordinary people do not understand why this word, faith, is used), but it is rational. You may say you have faith that you are sitting here, if the whole world says you are not sitting here, it will not make you think differently, so if there be a law of cause and sequence, that law binds us, and we want to get out of it and to be free from this bondage, and the only way out is not to seek the results of work. "But those who do not follow my instructions and my advice and who carp at this, know, they are deluded in all knowledge, they are senseless and are heading towards the destruction of the best ideals of life, they will not be able to accomplish the best ideals, because they have not the knowledge and understanding of the law or faith, but they ridicule and find fault with the master, or the wise men, or the Supreme Being."¹² What can such persons accomplish ? Nothing, because, if they had this ability and power of knowing things better, they could know them by depending upon their own understanding or knowledge. Now they depend upon some lower understanding and, if there be no faith in that higher understanding, nothing will be accomplished, because that person will not follow the instruction of that higher understanding and, consequently, he is neither able by his own powers, nor has he faith in the power of his superiors. Consequently he cannot get any result. He is senseless and his time and energy are wasted. Why do people not follow the example of the wise man ? Anticipating that question, Sri Krishna answered: "Even the wise men perform their actions in conformity with their nature. All individuals

follow their nature. What will restrain or avail it?"¹³ All the impressions which we gathered in our previous incarnations and with which we are born in this incarnation are in our nature. Nature means all the tendencies, desires, impressions and ideas which we have brought through a previous existence. That nature forces us to perform certain acts and no one can restrain it, we are born to follow it. Even in animals we will see that some animals have certain tendencies, others have not. Animals have souls, just as much as we have, but their expressions are different. They suffer and enjoy as we do, and they have their own language which we do not understand. If all people are bound to do and act according to their nature and if restraint is of no avail, what is the scope for personal exertion?

We have freedom and common will. But there are different results which we wish to accomplish, and we have desires for certain things, and aversion to others. "In regard to every object of senses, we shall find this love and hate. We either love it, or hate it; we have a desire for it, or aversion to it. These two are the directions of our actions and these two are obstacles to the path of spiritual progress."¹⁴ For instance, you have certain duties, you hate some of them and some others you like, and that what you like, you wish to do and what you do not like, you hate. But here Sri Krishna says that these two, love and hatred, are the greatest enemies, they prevent us from doing our duties properly. So, knowing these are our enemies, we must continue to perform work without being subject to those enemies. If we can do this, we can derive the best

13

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥३॥३३

Regarding the nature or *Prakriti*, Acharya Sankara said.

“प्रकृतिर्नाम पूर्वकृतधर्माधर्मादि संस्कारो वर्तमानजन्मादौ अभिव्यक्तः सा प्रकृतिः ।”

Really the present life is caused by the manifested impressions of the past life. The Indian psychologists say that hundreds and thousands of impressions are stored up in the bed of the subconscious or unconscious plane (*muladhara*) and when favourable condition comes, some of them are manifested and give the results. Our present birth is, therefore, the result of the past impressions.

14

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यबस्थितौ ।

तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत् तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥३॥३४

results. "One's own duties, even though they are devoid of merit, are better than acquired duties, although they are well discharged. It is better to die in the performance of one's duty than to seek the duty of another."¹⁵ One already living in the world and not ready for higher knowledge, should perform one's duties without thinking of other people. Such a man must not abandon those duties because he is not yet ready, and if those duties be performed without seeking the results, but leaving the results to the Supreme Being and working like the slave of his master or of the Supreme Being, and just obeying the commands, these duties will be the means of the purification of the mind or heart, and when the mind or heart is purified, the higher knowledge will dawn.

Blessed is he who has become a willing slave of a wise one, or of the Supreme Being of the universe. The wise men are those who think of themselves as one with the Supreme Being. Consequently, if we find one who is wise and has attained to that realization of oneness, we must follow his commands and offer the fruits of our works to him. Therefore, in India, ordinary persons, when they find their spiritual master, they think of him as one with the Supreme Being, and give the results of their works to him, and that is the easiest way. Because, ordinary people may not think of all this philosophy during the works of daily life, but if they can think of their spiritual master as part and parcel of the Supreme Being and announce the results of their works to the Divine Spirit, the results will be the same.

In India, the Hindus after performing their works to the best of their ability, say: "May this result go to Sri Krishna, the Lord and Master of the universe; let this be an offering to the Supreme" In this way, we can easily get out of this wheel of action and reaction, or of wheel of birth and rebirth, not seeking the results, but working under the direct command of the Supreme Being.

¹⁵

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥३।३५

Sankara and other commentators explained 'dharma' as work or duty according to one's own caste and creed (*varna* and *ashrama*). Sometimes *dharma* is translated as religious faith and creed. Sometimes *sva-dharma* is translated as one's own Self (*Atman*) or deity (*devata*). But here, in this topic of Karma Yoga, *dharma* can be taken as duty or selfless work.

CHAPTER XII

MIND AND SELF-CONTROL

Arjuna, the disciple, asked his master a question: "Ordinarily we see persons commit sinful acts reluctantly. Although they have a strong will to do otherwise, yet they perform those acts being forced, as it were from within, propelled by certain powers, and are dragged on to do certain things which they do not like to do. What is that power or force that leads individuals to sinful acts? By whose will does a man commit sin though reluctant, still impelled by some force?"¹

What answer do we generally expect to such questions? Those, trained in Western religions and theology, would give an answer: "It is the Satanic Power" i.e. the evil spirit that rules over us. The evil spirit is described in the Fourth Gospel as the 'Prince of the World'. Is that true? Is there such a thing as the evil spirit, or devil, or Satan, who forces us to do all these things? We do not find that kind of answer in Vedanta. In mythological religions, we find it. In ancient mythologies, we find the conception that there was a good spirit and an evil spirit; the good spirit created all the good things, and the evil spirit created all the evil things in this world. From that interpretation, we get the idea that the evil spirits force us to do all the evil acts.

This idea, which we find in Christianity, did not originate with the Jews. Those who have studied the relevant history carefully, know that this idea rose first in Parsia when Ahura Mazda, the creator of all good, was in constant fight with Ur, the creator of all evil, and Ur was the Satan out of heaven and fallen. From that time he became antagonistic to the creator of good, and he spread an evil influence all about himself to spoil the creation of Ahura Mazda. That idea was accepted during the Babylonian Captivity, and afterwards it was taken up along with the Christian rituals. Perhaps it was

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽहं पापं वरति पुरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्ण्ये बलादिव नियोजितः ॥१३६॥

believed by Jesus the Christ. Afterwards St. Paul accepted it and preached this doctrine of the Devil and Satanic influence amongst the Christians, and gradually it became a fact. Mohammed preached the same thing that Satan was the creator of evil. But there is only one rational religion in the world which does not believe in the mythological "creation-of-evil" answer and this philosophy is free from all that kind of mythology and superstitions beliefs. We do not accept that answer in Vedanta. Sri Krishna, who is worshipped as the Incarnation of God and appeared on this earth about 1400 years before the birth of Christ, answered this question in the light of the answers we get from the modern psychologists. Sri Krishna's answer has also a religious aspect.

Modern psychology traces the cause of different passions and desires, but it does not lead to any ultimate truth, nor does it help in favour of religious ideas or religious perceptions.

The Lord answered: "There are two things which force us to do sinful acts, one is passion or extreme desire or lust ; and the other is anger."² They are the two enemies which force us from within to perform sinful acts. Their nature is most devouring and most sinful. They are born of the qualities of passion, and those qualities are in nature (*Prakriti*). Nature is composed of three qualities (*gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). By qualities we mean the expressions of the forces in a certain way. There are certain activities of the mind which force us to do certain acts. We can classify these different states of mind by different names, under different laws.

The right state of mind is the expression of a pure force, and that state is described as *sattva*, where there is no anxiety or desire of any kind and all desires are fulfilled. In that state, the mind is restful and peaceful like the waters of a lake undisturbed by the wind, like the flame of a candle burning at a place where there is no breath of wind to move it. That state of mind is called a quality. The powers which produce that state of mind, are included in the state called *sattva*. When the mind is disturbed by all kinds of worry, anxiety and desire, that state is called *rajas*. Another is the state of ignorance and

² काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिशम् ॥३॥३७

dullness. When the mind is stupid and cannot think of anything and when you cannot fix your mind on an object, or cannot fix your mind on higher thoughts and when the mind is covered by a kind of film through which we do not see things as they are, as if in the darkness of night you are mistaking the stump of a tree for a robber, or a piece of rope in a dark room, then it is called *tamas*. In darkness, you mistake a rope as a snake, and get frightened. All these are from that state of dullness or inertia or stupidity, and that state is the worst. But that active state is here meant. That quality which produces these desires and when these desires are frustrated or find certain obstacles, they take the form of anger. It is the one state of mind which appears in two forms, desire and anger (*kama* and *krodha*). The desire takes the shape of an anger, when it works through obstructions, and these two, *kama* and *krodha*, are the principal enemies.³ But they are not two, they are the same thing, only appear in different states. Here we find an answer which satisfies all the rationalistic minds, or those who do not believe in any religion or mythology or book. You can find the answer to this question in yourself. You will be able to find what are the greatest enemies in you and what forces compel you to do these wrong deeds and sinful acts.

If we just sit quietly and analyse our mental conditions and study our own nature carefully, we find it is in ourselves : it is not an external force from outside that forces us to do these things, but it is in us. This desire or passion, as perceived in mythology, is called the Satan or Mara. The latter name was given by Lord Buddha when he was sitting in meditation, and that state is described as the temptation of Mara. That temptation was from within and not from outside. When Buddha was trying to meditate, his mind was disturbed by desires and evil thoughts.⁴ The cause of all acts

³ Sankara said:

“काम एष सर्वलोकेश्वरः यन्निमित्तं सर्वानर्थप्राप्तिः प्राणिनां, स एष कामः प्रतिहतः केनचित् क्रोधत्वेन परिणमते । कामेन हि प्रेरितो जन्तुः पापं करोति, अतो विद्वेद्यन् काममिह संसारे वैरिणम् ।”

⁴ Mara is the personification of desires (*kāma*) or impressions of different desires (*vāsanā-samskāra*). All *samskāras* of *vāsanās* sleep in seed forms in the bed of subconscious plane and they arose according to one's will.

of thoughts is the power of desires which are so strong that the will-power is overcome by the power of desire in ordinary minds, which possess no self-control. So there are two enemies (there is but one enemy which is desire and their desire appears in two aspects), first, as desire, and secondly, as anger. It is all-devouring, because nothing can please or satisfy or quench that fire which is burning in the soul of an ordinary mortal. This fire is the fire of desires. The more you give to and pour the objects of that desire into it the more it wants, and there is no end.⁵ Therefore, it is called all-devouring, and nothing can satisfy it. We can find it out in ourselves. How many times we have the same desire for the same thing and through its devouring we are going to be satisfied. When we learn the cause, we gradually try to remove that cause; when we know that we have an enemy and that enemy is trying to conquer us, we make another effort to subdue that enemy and conquer it.

There are different methods by which the enemies are conquered, and of these, four are the principal ones. 'Sāma' is to make peace by amicable settlement. 'Dāna' means to offer something to the enemy so that he will not do injury. 'Bheda' is to divide the enemy and then rule. 'Dama' or 'Danda' is the fourth and it means to punish the enemy. When the other three fail, the fourth one should be adopted. Here we face the enemy is all-devouring. The more you give to it, the more it wants, and that will never be satisfied. So that will not do. We

When Buddha tried to concentrate his mind, all *samaskāras*, past and present, began to manifest, and that was the manifestation of Mara during his meditation. Generally Mara is known as *mala* (impurity) or evil spirit (Satan).

⁵

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति ।

हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मैव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

Sri Krishna has also said:

कामरूपेण कोन्तेय दुष्पुणेनानलेन च ॥३१३९

Sankara said:

‘आवृतमेतेन ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा । ज्ञानी हि जानाति अनेन अहमनर्थे प्रयुक्तः पूर्वमेवेति । दुःखी च भवति नित्यमेव । अतोऽसौ ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरी न तु सुखस्व । स हि कामं तृष्णाकाले मित्रमिव पश्यन् तत्कार्ये दुःखे प्राप्ते जानाति तृष्ण्या अहं दुःखितृप्तापादित इति, न पूर्वमेव, अतो ज्ञानिन एव नित्यवैरी ।’

cannot divide it, because it is inseparable from our nature, but the only thing we can do, is to punish it and quieten it down while trying to kill it

We find that all the actions of our body and mind proceed from certain desires or motives. There is no human being who performs an act without having some kind of motive, either good or bad. And, therefore, when Sri Krishna gave that answer, it was a universal one and it applies to all individuals. All the sinful acts are governed by some desires which are in the mind of the individual, and the cause of those desires are the manifestation of the latent tendencies. This is something with which each individual is born. Each individual brings with himself or herself from the previous existence these tendencies and these, after remaining latent for some time, during childhood, babyhood and even during youth, finding favourable conditions, come out and force us to do things which we ought not to do.

“As fire is enshrouded in smoke, as a mirror is covered with dust or dirt, as the foetus is enclosed in the womb, so the soul is covered with these desires. The desires are like a cloud that covered the soul, the intelligence, the spark of light dwelling in each soul.”⁶

These are the three illustrations by which Sri Krishna explains how the individual egos are affected by the desires proceeding from within. Before the beginning of this physical form, the individual ego, or the soul existed. This is quite in accord with the fundamental principle of this philosophy which establishes the truth of the pre-existence of the soul and its existence even after death. There is no question about it. The immortality of the soul is not a thing to be disputed, and it is a fact. In Western countries, we hear much about immortality of the soul. That is the question amongst all the theologians in churches and everywhere, but, in India, you will never

‘धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च।

यथोत्प्लेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥३।३८

The soul is covered with desires, and the soul is the embodiment of pure consciousness (*jnana*) and so it is taken that consciousness (*jnana*) is covered with the darkness of desires. The Gita also says: * * “आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन”

(३।३९)।

find that discussion. As the present existence of the soul is a settled fact, so the pre-existence of the soul, or the existence of soul after death, are also a fact. So when we study any Eastern philosophy or religion, we must understand that immortality of the soul is understood. They believe and know perfectly well that the soul can never die, just as God Himself can never die. So, taking this as our guide, we must study every word, or sentence, or passage, either in the *Gita*, or in Vedanta philosophy. The fundamental principle of all religions and philosophies is immortality of the soul, and it is a settled fact

So, before the birth of this body, the soul existed. It had desires and these desires were very fine. They did not manifest themselves in activities. They were latent, just as latent as our desires are in a state of deep sleep. When you are going to sleep, all the desires of your mind and body and senses remain latent, unperceived, and unmanifested. Where do they go? They are not dead, they remain dormant ; and from that illustration we understand how the desires remain dormant in the soul before the birth of the body. Some of these desires begin to work and are manifested and take the form of the body. The desires must be fulfilled first, and they depend upon their having a form . The present body is the result of certain desires we had before we took this body. All the works which we have done during our present life, are nothing but the expressions of so many desires which we had in ourselves. The outside world is nothing but that which brings and gives suggestions to bring out that which is within us. So, when these desires that take the form of the body, can manifest themselves in the way of obtaining the body and are fulfilled, all other desires come up, and finding the conditions favourable, these desires begin to manifest themselves and become grosser. They remain at first very fine, then they become stronger and grosser. In the illustration of the fire and smoke, fire is the cause of the smoke. If there were no fire, there would have been no smoke. It is the process of burning that produces smoke. When the force of desire begins to burn in the soul, there is the expression, and at that time there is activity, but that activity is potential and has not reached its full state. The smoke covers the fire without destroying the burning power of the fire. We may not see the fire when it is enshrouded with smoke, but the fire is there.

The soul has intelligence in latent desire, which is at first very weak and fine. When there is no outward manifestation of this desire, that state can be compared to this first illustration. It is burning inside and covering the intellect and intelligence of the individual. Gradually when the soul is covered too much with the smoke of desire, it forces the individual to seek external objects. In that state, it has become stronger than it was at first, because it propels the senses and the body to seek the objects from outside, and this is the second state.

This state is illustrated as a mirror covered with dust—‘यथादर्शो मलेन च’, and this state, where the mirror is covered with dust it does not come from the mirror itself, but it comes from an external thing and covers the mirror, so there will be no reflection on the mirror. When the mirror is covered by the objects of desire which is like the dust, there is no reflection of the highest Truth in the soul at that time. We lose the proper recognition of truth or the nature of things. We do not understand things as they are, because there is no reflection in our soul of the true nature of external objects.

But in the third illustration of a foetus—(‘यथोत्प्रेनावृतो गर्भः’), there a man enjoys external objects and forgets himself for the time being. That state is worst, and as a foetus cannot move, it remains where it is in that condition. So it is almost like a slave. So the soul when overpowered with external objects, goes into that state of slavery, becomes attached to it, and loses its strength and individuality. So these three illustrations⁷ explain the three different states of desire. The first is the fine state, the second is the grosser state, and the third is the grossest. The majority of people in the world are in the third state, because they are inseparably attached to the objects of desire. It is impossible for them to be separated. It is a part of their life and soul. They have been enjoying these things for a long time, and that is the reason why they cannot control the enemy, they cannot get away, they have lost the self-mastery, just as we see in everybody, they are acting like slaves, because they are in the third state, and the nature of their soul is absolutely covered as if it is in a foetus or bog. That person is covered and imprisoned in a bog, and cannot

⁷ (क) ‘धूमेनान्नियते वह्निः’, (ख) ‘यथादर्शो मलेन च’, (ग) ‘यथोत्प्रेनावृतो गर्भः’ ।

move his limbs or exercise the power of will. That is the state of worldliness (*संसारित्व*), and the majority of people are in that state. Therefore, although they may not be willing to perform certain acts, still they are forced from within and cannot help it. Wisdom is shaded by this perpetual enemy of the wise, and these desires are gross and insatiable. The wisdom is shaded by this desire, gross and insatiable, and that desire is the perpetual enemy of the wise.

Here you will find the expression : 'the perpetual enemy of the wise'—'ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणो', * * but, in ordinary people of ignorance, it is not a perpetual enemy. Ordinary people do not consider it an enemy until the evil results proceed from the fulfilment of their desires. The wise ones, from the very beginning, before the expression and manifestation of these desires, feel unhappy, because they do not want it, they do not like it, and feel that they are going to do something which is not right and, at the time of enjoyment of any external object which is pleasing to the senses, the wise ones do not forget that it is not the thing they want, but the ignorant take it as a friend in the beginning of enjoyment until the evil effects proceed from the fulfilment of these desires. Therefore it is the perpetual enemy of the wise ones who have awakened to the Truth, as to the reality of their true Self. But those who are not awakened, do not find them as enemies from the very beginning, and that is the difference.

. It is also described and regarded as ignorance (*ajnana*), but even after the fulfilment of certain desires for the first time, they are not satisfied i.e. are not destroyed, but come up again and remain in a dormant or latent state for some time in the form of impressions, and then come out in the form of desire, and force the individual soul to seek the objects of pleasure. These objects of pleasure, having too much attraction, enslave the individual ego for the second and third time. This process continues until it is a confirmed habit, and then there is no power to resist it, and it is very difficult.

Habit is the second nature, and the first nature becomes this habit. When a child is born with a certain tendency and that is expressed at a certain age as a natural habit, or as a natural thing, automatically, as it were, we must understand that as the result of a previous habit, what we call an *instinct*. Instinct

comes through continuous expression or manifestation of a certain kind of activity. In playing a piano, first of all you have to make special efforts to regulate your nerves and muscles, then when it becomes habit, you can play automatically, and then you can think of other things, or talk with friends at that time, but your hands and muscles will go on working with perfect ones. So it is with everything.

When you are not in habit of meditating, in trying to think of something higher, your mind will have extreme difficulty, just as much as if you were learning to play the piano, or any action which is new to you and which impression you did not possess from previous birth, is very difficult. It is for this reason that the practice of Yoga is very difficult for those who are beginning it in this life for the first time. This is described in my book, *How to be a Yogi*.⁸ There are three kinds of aspirations. Those who are born with a certain amount of habit, or those who practise from a previous incarnation, find it easy in this life, but those who begin for the first time, find it extremely difficult. They find a great many obstacles in the path.

As the fire is never quenched by butter, so the fire of desire is never quenched by the butter of the objects of desire. The more we pour it on the fire, the more it flares up. So the more we indulge ourselves in the objects of desire, the more we need them and the more unhappy and miserable we are, therefore, it is said, 'they are greedy, and and insatiable'—'दुष्पूरेणानलेन च'; 'महाशनो महापाम्पा'।

Where is the seat of this constant enemy of these wise ones? We must know the seat before we can conquer it. "The senses, mind, and reason are the seat of these desires and through these it deludes the embodied soul deluding his wisdom"⁹ Mind is that which has thoughts, desires, and doubts as to whether I shall do this or that doubting or vacillating faculty is called mind.¹⁰ *Buddhi* is that understanding or discrimination that

⁸ Vide also (a) *Yoga, Theory and Practice* (1968); (b) *Yoga Psychology*; (c) *True Psychology* by Swami Abhedananda.

⁹ इन्द्रियानि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।

एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥३१४०

¹⁰ The Indian psychologists hold that mind is known by its dual aspects, or by two modifications, *samkalpa* (positive will) and *vikalpa* (negative will).

leads to my doing this or that. It is more like the power of decision first we cogitate, then we decide.¹¹ In fact, the mind and its different functions and sense-powers are the seat of this enemy or desires. When we know the seat and where the enemy's stronghold is, then we can take care, and gradually conquer that enemy, and become the master of it. When we let our sense-powers go outside seeking objects without exercising any control whatsoever, then we are following these desires. They will drag us towards objects of different kinds and every kind of amusement. Why do people go to the theatre and other places of amusement? Because, their senses are not under their control, they like to please their eyes and ears. Why do people like or use perfumes? Because they like to please their sense of smell, etc. They do not exercise the power of control over the senses, but those who do exercise this, do not care for them.

In these little things, we find that ordinarily we are getting into this habit of following desires without questioning. So, in our ordinary life, these little things which we are not mindful of, put us into habits. We ought to exercise the power of control over our mind and senses when we need it. And so even for a minute or second of our life we must not forget that these are the seats of desires, and we must not let these desires get stronger than ourselves. We must try to conquer the enemy by keeping it under our power, and not be overpowered by it. Then, when you are sitting alone quietly and thinking of different objects which you have seen or heard, or which you are thinking that you have eaten some delicious dish, you would like to taste that again and again. In this way, these impressions come up and create desires and force us from within to seek these objects, and, therefore, mind is the seat of all desires.

In fact, mind substance is the embodiment^u of modifications (*vruttis*). David Hume and other Western philosophers call mind the bundle of sensations or impressions.

¹¹ 'निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धिः।' Now *buddhi* or intellect is one of the manifestations of *Antahkarana* (prime internal organ). It cogitates and determines or decides. It ascertains which is wrong or right, or what is good or bad. Regarding mind and intellect, Sankara said in the *Gita* *hasya*:

“मनः कङ्कल्पविकल्पात्मकम् । तथा मनस्तु परा बुद्धिनिश्चयात्मिका”

Vide the *Gita*, III. 42.

Your mind is building castles in the air and thinking of different things which you have already enjoyed and want to have them over again. It is for this reason mind is described as the seat (*ashraya* or *adhisthana*). When mind is governed by intellect or understanding which is not perfect and when some diversion comes, then we find that we are governed by these impressions and desires. So these are the three seats of the enemy, and from these principal seats the enemy deludes the embodied creature shrouding his wisdom. First of all, the desire comes up in the form of a cloud and covers the intelligence, makes us see things as in the darkness or twilight, partially dark and partially light, and in that state we cannot distinguish the unrealities from the realities, and that is the enshrouding of the intellect, or understanding, or reasoning faculties, by the power of desire. Therefore, first of all, having subjugated these senses, mind, and understanding, conquer, or cast off, this evil which destroys wisdom and spiritual realization, or intuition.¹²

Jnana means knowledge which we gather from books, scriptures, and instructions of teachers, or from the external world, or studying the external world. That knowledge is not the highest; it is only a preliminary step to higher knowledge. Higher knowledge is that which is called *vijnana*. You have heard and learned by reading books that there is such thing as God, you have known it, and that kind of highest knowledge is not realization. So you must realize it and be one with it, make it a part of yourself, and must be conscious of it. When you say you are conscious of your soul, you have only heard of it, you have not realized it. When you have become conscious of the thing which you have heard as the soul, then you have realized it. Or when you are conscious of the object of knowledge in the same way, you have reached that higher knowledge called

¹² तस्मात्तमिन्द्रिणाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतषेभ ।

पाम्पानं प्रजहिहेयनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥३॥४१

Sankara said,

“एनं प्रकृतं वैरिणं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ।”

vijnana.¹³ These two kinds of knowledge, *jnana* and *vijnana*, are conquered or destroyed by this enemy, which is no other than desires. The desires (*kama*) make us forget what we have learned, and make us forget what we have realized.

When you are studying or meditating, if the desire for external objects comes to your mind, then the objects of meditation put you on a different plane and make you forget what you are doing, or trying to do, it conquers the intellect and understanding, and makes it act in a different way. The two forces manifest themselves simultaneously. First, the enemy conquers and then drags the mind away. Av. means conquering power, and ves. makes it active on a different plane. This you will feel whenever you will try to conquer this enemy. When Gautama Buddha tried to concentrate his mind and to meditate, then the enemy, Mara, applied his full force and power upon the mind of Buddha to divert his mind to outward world and played many miracles. But Buddha knew the nature of the mind, and so he took a vow and sat down to concentrate and became deeply absorbed in meditation. The Mara or enemy was conquered. But, ordinarily, the enemy, *kama*, or desire, or Mara, will not let you meditate or think of the highest Reality, it will drag you down on the material plane, therefore, it is the enemy. That which prevents us from going to the abode of eternal Bliss, to which we belong, is the enemy.

¹³ Sankara also said on the commentary on the III. 41 *sloka* of the *Gita*:

“ज्ञानं शाल्लत आचार्यतश्च आत्मादीनामवबोधः, विज्ञानं विशेषतः तदनुभवः।”

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has explained the meanings on significances of *jnana* and *vijnana* in this way: (a) ‘when we climb or reach the roof of a house by the help of stairs, we say that the roof is higher than the stairs, but, in truth, the materials, out of which the roof and the stairs are constructed, are the same brick-dusts and lime. The staircase is here regarded as *jnana* and the roof of the house, as *vijnana*’. (b) ‘*Jnana* is to know the *Atman* through the path of discrimination (*vichara*) like ‘not this, not this’ (*neti neti*). But *vijnana* is a complete knowledge or realization. Some heard of milk, some have seen it, but others have tasted it. Those who have heard of God, are still in ignorance: Those who have seen God, are the *Jnanis*, but those who have tasted or realized God (the absolute Brahman), are the *Vijnanis*.’ —Cf. *Memoirs of Ramakrishna* by Swami Abhedananda, also the *Kathamrita* by ‘M’ (or Master Mahasaya).

That which keeps us on the plane of phenomena, to which we do not belong, is our enemy¹⁴ We must try to conquer our enemy whether external or internal, but, in order to conquer our enemy, we must have a strong will and necessary knowledge of our ideal ; we must feel and keep in mind that we have learned and heard regarding our true self, that we are masters of ourselves, that we are a part of the divinity, or one with God, or perfect and free from all bondages. We must remember this and should not let any thing obstruct this knowledge. If anything succeeds in standing in the way of this knowledge we are then under the force or the power of the enemy and cannot conquer him. If we keep that in mind and with patience and knowledge, struggle on, and if we try to concentrate our mind on the highest truth, we do succeed. If you keep a constant watch over the mind, it will not be covered by that cloud or veil or curtain. And you should control the sense power. At the time of meditation you may have a desire to hear music or see some form which comes to your mind. In that case you are likely to forget what you were doing. That distraction is the effect of the forces exercised by the enemy, and under these circumstances, you must constantly remember what you are doing at the time and exercise your knowledge not to let the enemy get hold of you or get power over you. If you are trying to control and conquer the enemy which has taken possession of your mind and senses and understanding how will you make your headquarters strong, upon what firm ground will you fight with the enemy?

If we compare the sense-powers with the external physical form, we will find that the sense-powers are finer than the physical gross form. Finer than these sense-powers is the mind, which guides and directs the senses. Finer than the mind is the

¹⁴ Anandagiri clarified in his glossary: “ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा” (३।३९)।

He said,

“कामस्य ज्ञानं प्रत्यावरणसिद्धयर्थं ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिण्येत्यादिविशेषणम् ।
नित्यम् एव तु उत्पत्त्यवस्था कार्यावस्था च कामस्य कथ्यते । * * स्वरूपतो
नित्यवैरित्वाविशेषेऽपि ज्ञानाज्ञानभ्यामवान्तरभेदसिद्धिरित्यर्थः । आकाङ्क्षाद्वारा प्रकृत
वैरिणमेव स्फोरयति ।”

reasoning powers, or reasoning faculties, or understanding. Finer than the power of understanding is the Knower, the self-conscious *Atman*.¹⁵

Taking our stand on the conscious Self, we must fight with the enemy and conquer it. That conscious Self is not subjugated by the desire, or the mind. The conscious Self is not the same as the faculties of the mind, or any mental condition. If you think of yourself or sit quietly and watch what is going on within you, you will find that one desire is coming up and staying for a few seconds and then passing away and another comes like the current of water. But you are the knower of the first desire, and the same as the knower of the second desire which does come and pass away. So you will find that a continuous desire is going on within you, and you are like the witness. Keep yourself like a witness without coming under the control of the desires or thoughts. Taking your stand upon yourself as the Knower, fight with these enemies and you will conquer them, because your Self is beyond understanding, beyond mind, beyond senses-powers. Thus having known Him and transcending reason and understanding and having subdued your mind and senses by the power of your true nature of the soul, or *Atman*, slay this enemy of desire which is hard to conquer.¹⁶

It is the most difficult thing to conquer the mind, because it is the stronghold of the enemy like desire. When you have succeeded in bringing the enemy under control, you will not be able to kill it at first or kill it entirely as long you are living in the world, and if you can exercise this desire keeping it under control, you will accomplish a great deal. And let that be the effort. Very few can conquer the enemy entirely, living in the world, because the mind is constantly distracted by these things of the world. You have no control over your environ-

¹⁵ इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परीं बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥३॥४२

Sankara said:

“स बुद्धेर्दृष्टा परमात्मा ।”

¹⁶ एवं बुद्धे परं बुद्धा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥३॥४३

ments, as you are not free, being bound hand and foot by the chain of ignorance and delusion.

But you should not wait until the time comes when you are entirely free. That is not the right way, but exercise your power. Do not forget what you have learned. Know that you are the immortal soul, and you can transcend understanding, mind, and sense powers. You are the knower and the master of all. Believing in and having faith in yourself as such, if you do exercise your powers, you will gain mastery over and conquer your enemy, otherwise the enemy will get hold of you without making you feel that it is doing so. So, if you wish to conquer your enemy, be free from all attachments. Try to be the master of yourself in every action of life. Do not lose patience, and keep the ideal of perfection before you, or the conquest of the enemy as the highest. Whether you can accomplish it in this life or not, do not mind, but go as far as you can in life, and you will not have to begin it over in the next life. Try to do as much as you can, and keep the ideal as the highest. Subjugating the mind and the senses, keeping the mind peaceful and restful, and not being a slave to passion and desire, if we live on, we will be the happiest creatures. Vedanta makes it as the ideal. It points out something tangible. Who cares for salvation that begins in the grave, going to heaven and being free from eternal perdition? Put aside that ideal. It is not necessary and it is of no use in our everyday life, but taking this as the most practical thing, control your mind, conquer the enemy and be the master of yourself.

This is salvation. This is freedom. If the soul is not free from powers of the enemy, that soul is not saved. This ideal we gather from Vedanta. Throw aside such dualistic sectarian religions that give you all kinds of mythological ideas which are not necessary in this age of reason.

CHAPTER XIII

PRACTICE OF JNANA YOGA

Let us now begin with the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. We have already seen in the second and third chapters how Sri Krishna describes the true nature of devotion and knowledge i.e. knowledge of our true Self and the supreme Being, and of different methods to be followed to attain it. Karma Yoga has been described as one of the methods for the purification of mind or heart, and when the heart is purified, it gradually reflects the higher knowledge, or wisdom.

Here we must remember that this *Bhagavad Gita* contains the essence of the Vedas. By the Vedas we do not mean any particular book, but they mean wisdom (*jnana*), or the highest knowledge that has been revealed through Seers of truth and inspired Prophets and Incarnations of God. They deal with the eternal truth and also the eternal laws of nature, and, in the Vedas, we find there are two paths, one, which leads to the world, and the other, which leads to Divinity.¹

These two paths have been in existence from the beginning of the creation of humanity i.e. from the beginning of evolution and will continue to exist forever so long the human beings will exist. The one path which leads to the world is that which is adopted by the majority of mankind, who seek worldly pleasures and comforts and have attachment to their material bodies and to earthly things and possessions. This path is natural and the best with all beings at first, until they come to knowledge of the true nature of this world, and until come to the knowledge of the ephemeral and transitory nature of the phenomenal world. *Atmajnana* or spiritual

¹ These two paths are known as *pravritti-marga* and *nivritti-marga*, which have been prescribed in the *karmakanda* and the *jnana-kanda* of the Vedas. The performances of sacrifices and rites (*yajnas* and *satras*) are included in the *karmakanda* or work-portion, and *shravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana* (*vedanta-vichara*), etc. are included in the *jnana-kanda* or *Upanishads*.

knowledge dawns independent, and it does not depend upon anything.²

In the *Upanishads*, these two paths are described, and it is also said that those who are short-sighted and lacking intellect, adopt this path which leads to the phenomenal pleasures and comforts, and make for earthly success in this life and earthly prosperity. The following of this path makes our hearts filled with desires of a worldly nature, and we seek nothing but what is perceptible to our senses and cannot think of anything higher or greater. But the other path is that which leads to the *Atman*, the absolute Reality. Therefore the one is the path which leads to success and prosperity of the individual and the other leads to that which is unchangeable and eternal. Everything that is done for our own sake, is the result of these tendencies which are manifested in the persons who lead a worldly life. Sopenhaur called it the 'will-to-live', and not the 'will-to-attain highest truth'.

Between the two paths, the one leads to attachment to everything, clinging to the body and everything connected with the body and the senses, and the other leads us to transcend or detach everything connected with the body. One leads to suffering, sorrow, pain and discomfort of every kind and also to continuous birth and rebirth on this plane, while the other leads to eternal happiness, peace, and freedom from birth and rebirth i.e. from coming back to this plane of desires over and over again.

These two paths were known to India from very ancient times. They were described and taught by those who first appeared on this earth at the beginning of evolution of the

² Really *jñāna-jijnāsā* comes after *dharma-jijnāsā*. *Dharma* or performance of *dharma* is included in the province of *karmakanda* and *pravṛtti-marga*. In the commentary on the *sūtra* *athāto brahma-jijnāsā* (I. I. 1.), Sankara said

“अयुदयफलं धर्मज्ञानं, तच्चानुष्ठानापेक्षम्। निःश्रेयसफलन्तु ब्रह्मज्ञानं, न चानुष्ठानान्तरापेक्षम्। भव्यश्च धर्मो जिज्ञास्यो न ज्ञानकालेऽस्ति, पुरुषव्यापारतन्त्रत्वात्। इह तु भूतं ब्रह्मजिज्ञास्यं, नित्यनिवृत्तत्वाच्च पुरुषव्यापारतन्त्रम्॥”

From this it is understood that *jñanakanda* does not depend upon *karmakanda*, and it is not the fact that *jñana* comes as the result of *karma*.

present cycle. These two paths have been described in the first two chapters of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and here Sri Krishna refers to those two paths and he says: "This is devotion to knowledge, to truth, to the same God, who presides over the sun, and from that same God it came down on this earth to human beings" The first man received it from the same God, and afterwards it was handed down through his disciples to later generations.³ But this path of devotion to knowledge is imperishable, because the results are imperishable. Especially results of the second path lead to divinity, or to the path of renunciation, sacrificing everything that the individual possesses. Gradually the knowledge of these two paths came down to these ancient monarchs who ruled over the ancient nations. It was not restricted to any particular nation, but here it is described by the Aryans, the most ancient of all nations and more ancient than the Syrians in that line of knowledge. Other nations had revelations, but they did not discover these two paths which were discovered by the sages and seers of truth in ancient India.

We can study the ancient religion of Egypt which is nothing but the means of attainment of the phenomenal pleasures. We can study the ancient religion of China which is nothing but the ancestor-worship. We can study the ancient religion of Persia which does not describe the path of renunciation, that leads to divinity. From the close study it appears that at first spiritual knowledge of the Brahman received through a series of preceptors and disciples by the royal saints, who were kings as well as saints. The ancient Seers of Truth were not those who retired from the world and lived in the wilderness or in the caves, but they lived in the world and at the same time followed this path of renunciation ; they performed work and at the same time renounced the results of work.

Some people think that the Brahmins at first possessed the highest knowledge and wisdom, but, in the Vedas, we find that the Kshatriyas or the warrior classes possessed the highest wis-

* इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।

विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह् मनुर्दिक्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥

एवं परस्परप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ॥४११-२

dom. The Brahmins of the priestly caste in India did not possess at first the highest wisdom. They rather used to make a profession of religion and were mostly worldly. "This Yoga hath been lost through lapse of long ages."⁴ At first it was known to the royal sages and to their disciples, as we find it in the Vedas, but before the advent of Sri Krishna it was lost and was unknown for certain length of time, because it fell into the hands of those with weak intellects and of those who did not possess self-control and higher powers. Even the knowledge of those who could govern their passions and anger and other worldly desires, was covered by the cloud of selfishness, and its spirit was buried in the mass of wordly pleasures.

Sri Krishna said: "This very ancient Yoga hath been disclosed to thee, because thou art devoted to me and thou art my friend and this is the secret supreme".⁵ This devotion to knowledge, this path by which one can attain to the Self-knowledge and the knowledge of the utmost reality of the universe, is the supreme secret, and Sri Krishna says that he divulges this secret to Arjuna, because he (Arjuna) was devoted to him. He was his disciple and friend. Arjuna wanted to know how he could teach the sun-God at the beginning of evolution of the cycle, as he was born much later? How could he teach at the beginning of evolution? "Thy birth was posterior, prior was the birth of the first man and also of the sun-god. How can I know that thou taught at the beginning of the evolution of this cycle? What proof is there? Didst thou teach in the same body which thou possess now, or didst thou teach in another form which thou lost afterwards?"⁶

In answering this question, Sri Krishna describes the theories of reincarnation and rebirth; He says: "Both you and I have passed through many births, I know them all, but you

⁴ स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परन्तपः ॥४१२

⁵ स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥४१३

⁶ अपरे भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥४१४

do not know".⁷ This is an idea which is very different from the Christian idea of the appearance of the soul on this earth. The Christians believe that the soul comes at the time of the birth of the individual, and these souls have been created fresh every time by the Supreme Being. According to them, the souls do not exist before the birth of the body, but they continue to exist after death for eternity. If you examine this belief patiently, you will find the absurdity of this doctrine or theory. That which did not exist in the eternity before the birth of this body, cannot exist in the eternity after the death of the body, because something can never come out of nothing, it existed before and will continue to exist in future.

This question has been asked again and again: "If we existed before, why do we not remember our past?" Our intellect is covered with the darkness and veil of ignorance, and our memory is not clear enough and is not sharp enough so as to remember all the past births we have gone through, but Sri Krishna's memory was different from the memory of ordinary individuals. His mind and intellect were pure and perfect and his power of knowledge was unique, and he never lost the consciousness of his true nature. Consequently he could remember and see, as it were, the past and the future in the same way as he does he present. In reality, there is no such thing as past and future, there is the eternal present, but we do not know it. What we call the past, did not exist except under certain conditions.

Things are evolving one after another in a chain and if we stand on one of the links and look at that particular one upon which we stand, that will be the present and all that preceded that link, will be the past and that which comes after, will be the future, but they are all connected or linked together. Those who foresee the future, see the present as it exists, and these present conditions reveal to them what results will follow in quick succession, and then they can go through all these different stages that will appear in future, and, in that way, they can see what

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

तान्यहं वेद सर्वानि न त्वं वेत्स्य परन्तप ॥४।५

Sankara said:

“अहं पुनर्नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावत्वात् अनावरणज्ञानशक्तिरिति वेदाहं ।”

will happen in ten or twenty, or fifty years. In the same manner, they can see in vision what happened in the past, just as we know that Buddha could remember his five hundred births through which he came into that body in which he attained to Buddhahood. He went through different stages of chain of evolution.

Sri Krishna also remembered all his previous incarnations, but there is a difference between an ordinary mortal who goes through these incarnations and one like Sri Krishna, or Buddha, or Christ, who has come down to help mankind. The idea of the Incarnation of God has been known to India from prehistoric times and before it was thought of by the Jewish followers of Christ or the Greek philosophers.

Here Sri Krishna who existed 1400 years before Christ, is about to explain the truth of Incarnation of God. In India, Sri Krishna is worshipped as the Incarnation of the Divinity, just as Christ is worshipped in the Christendom, and Buddha is worshipped by the Buddhists. So Sri Krishna said that he knew all these births, and in one of his previous incarnations he taught the sun-god. We must know that all the highest knowledge, the supreme knowledge of the soul, or the ultimate end and aim of life, has come to human beings from the infinite source of knowledge. Ordinary mortals with short-sighted intellect, depending entirely upon sense perceptions and upon the sensations and ideas of a limited nature, can never discover the highest truths which are unknown and unknowable to the ordinary human mind. They could never understand the path which would lead to the ultimate goal of all religions, or the ultimate ideal of life. They could never realize the unity of the individual soul with the universal Spirit. These things cannot be known to those who depend entirely upon sense-perception. Consequently the Western scientists will never reveal these truths. These truths exist beyond the reach of the senses. If we wish to perceive the soul, or try to measure it or capture it, by sense power, we will never succeed, because it is beyond the sense-perceptions, and even of the human-mind.

So all truths that have been taught by different scriptures of the world and all knowledge that came to the soul came from the divine source, or came either through revelation, or through inspiration, or through some higher spirits or angels,

or what you may call them. Mohammed received his revelation through an angel, and Christ received it from angels and the holy ghost, and Buddha received it through revelations within himself, etc., but the true meaning of revelation is the knowledge of the *Atman* within us which is the Soul of our souls. We may interpret it by saying that it has come through some angel, or through the spirit of some higher nature, but those interpretations are imperfect. The highest interpretation is that the supreme Spirit, which is the source of all knowledge, is all-pervading. It also dwells in our souls, and revelation and knowledge of truth have come from that common source.

Ordinary individuals come into existence being bound by the law of *karma*. When God incarnates Himself in a human form, He does not come into existence being forced by the law of action and reaction, or by the desires and tendencies, by which ordinary individuals are forced to come into existence and take another form and birth. But, when the Divinity incarnates and becomes the Saviour of mankind, He does it simply through compassion and love for humanity.

Here you will find in India and in Hindu philosophy, especially in the Vedanta philosophy, the highest and best explanation that could be given on the subject of Incarnation of the Divinity in a human form. Christian theologians have been struggling for nearly a thousand years to explain the truth behind the Incarnation of Christ, but they have not succeeded yet. They cannot make their explanations stand upon firm religious, scientific, and philosophical principles. Their explanations stand upon dogmas and doctrines, which do not harmonize with the laws of reason, but here you will find a different explanation.

If the law of *karma* does not force the Divinity to come into existence and take a human form, what would be the object? In order to explain that Sri Krishna says: "Though unborn, the imperishable Spirit, which is the lord of all beings, presiding over my own nature, I manifest myself through the mysterious power of *maya*."⁸ Though unborn, when uses the words 'I, me, mine', he never uses them in the ordinary sense, in

⁸ अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥४।६

which ordinary mortals use 'I, me, mine', in the sense of Mr. or Mrs. and so and so with a form. We identify ourselves with the body and with earthly relations, but when an Incarnation speaks of himself and uses the words 'I, me, mine', he never means the same thing as we mean by these terms. On this point the Christian theologians have misunderstood Christ. When he said "I and my Father are one", he never meant that Jesus of Nazareth was one with the Father, but he meant the Spirit or God. The Christian will have to go to India to understand the real significance or true meaning of Incarnation of God, and in what sense the Incarnation of God used the terms 'I, me, mine'.

Sri Krishna has said: "Though I am not born and subject to birth, although I am the Supreme Spirit and am unchangeable, and although I am the Lord of all beings, yet incarnate or manifest myself in a human form through my wonderful and mysterious inscrutable power of *maya*". We come to this earth being subject to the laws of nature, but when the Divine manifests Himself in a human form, apparently, He becomes subject to the laws of nature, but at the same time He retains His mastery over nature and shows that through all the actions of His life.

What is the difference between one who has attained to the higher supreme knowledge by being subject to the law of *karma* and one who has attained to freedom and Incarnation of God? There is a great deal of difference. The one who was imperfect at one time, becomes perfect and conscious of his perfection, but, in the divine Incarnation, there was no time when that consciousness was ever lost. Ordinary mortals, through the practice of Yoga, can attain to that supreme knowledge, can remember all the previous incarnations, can know the future and feel the oneness with the Supreme Spirit, or the Universal Being, through the practice of Yoga. But the Divine Incarnation, whether he practises Yoga or not, he possesses that perfection from the very beginning. He will not have to attain to anything, because he is the embodiment of perfection, and that is the difference. He is all-knowing, omniscient, and omnipotent, and appears as a human being, with a human form in order to help those on this plane, and that is the difference from an ordinary man. We may struggle hard, and after hard

struggling, we can attain to perfection, which is the same knowledge and state of spiritual realization as was possessed by the Incarnation of the Divinity in the form of Sri Krishna or Buddha, but at the same time, we cannot be the same as the Incarnations, Sri Krishna or Buddha. Because we have been bound by the laws of nature at present and would attain to freedom in time, but Sri Krishna and Buddha and other Saviours like them were never bound by any law, but were always masters of nature.

The same Divinity appears in the form of Sri Krishna at one time and in the form of Buddha at another time and as Christ at another. In other nations also, there have been many Incarnations. In the nineteenth century, there was the Incarnation of Ramakrishna in India, who is worshipped today by thousands, just as Sri Krishna, or Christ, or Buddha, were worshipped. Here is the difference between the Christian idea of Incarnation and the Hindu idea. The Christian idea is that there was only one Incarnation and that was Jesus the Christ, and there were none before and will be none afterwards. Christ may appear in the clouds on the last Day of Judgment, but that is different. But the Hindus believe that the Lord of the universe does manifest Himself being free from time and space, at any time amongst any nations to help mankind. This idea has been described in the next two verses.

“Wherever religion declines and irreligion prevails, I manifest myself in a human form to establish righteousness, to destroy evil, and have been doing this cycle after cycle in every age”.⁹ Whenever religion declines and is corrupted, when reformation is necessary, the Divine Being, who is all-knowing and all-powerful, manifests Himself in the form of a human being to save the good souls and to punish the wicked ones and for establishing righteousness and religion. It is subject to the laws of nature in the way of birth and death, but, at the same time, the Incarnation of God shows wonderful powers.

Regarding the immaculate conception and all those ideas found in the Christian Bible, we can see that in the life of Sri

‘यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य दानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

Krishna, the same stories have been found, almost exactly the same. The killing of the infants by Kangsa and the birth and appearance of the angels and the coming of the wisemen—we find all these exactly the same in connection with the birth of Sri Krishna and of Buddha. We do not know what was the origin of such stories, but they prevail in every country. So we need not go into the miraculous part. Those who believe in the miracles, can believe in them if they wish, but Vedanta does not give any indulgence to this subject, but gives the philosophic side of all these questions, and tries to explain it through reason and science as much as we possibly can.

Whenever there is any need and whenever prayers arise from sincere and earnest souls, the Divine Being becomes conscious of such prayers and as a result He is sure to come. Those prayers which rise from the believing souls, who have faith and trust in this law, is bound to be fulfilled. Prayer is nothing but a particular way of expressing the desire which is dwelling in the bottom of our souls. If we seek help from the universe, whether we know or believe in God or not, if we express our desires freely and seek help from the universe, where infinite powers exist, we are bound to receive help and get the result. So, when penance or prayers are there for the manifestation of the Divinity, at that time the Divine Being is bound to manifest Himself to save the virtuous and to punish the wicked. All these concentrated prayers and thoughts will bring them out from the infinite ocean of reality, and it cannot be otherwise. During the time when the Jews were so oppressed and prayed for help from the Jehovah, Jehovah sent some manifestation. In India, there have been many such instances.

So, that is the eternal law. Whenever there is any need of any special thing, either in the form of religion, or in the form of worldliness, or earthly success, or prosperity, we must find some manifestations. If we pray or desire these things earnestly and sincerely, we shall have them and there is no doubt about it. "He who knows my birth and deeds which are divine, and he who understands the spirit of my true nature, departing from

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्टकृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवानि युगे युगे ॥४१७-८

this body, becomes free from rebirth and all laws and comes to me" said Sri Krishna, the Divine Being.¹⁰

It is very difficult to understand the difference between an ordinary mortal and the Incarnation of God, because He lives like an ordinary mortal, does the same acts, but at the same time His life is different. His moods, thoughts and ideal are quite different, and His consciousness is also different, as His mind and consciousness remain in tune with the Infinity. He cannot express his consciousness except in certain ways through his actions and by showing his powers. It is not necessary that he should perform miracles all the time, because, when we go to the bottom of what we call miracles, we find that our life itself is a miracle. Can we imagine how a minute germ of life comes into a human form and manifests all these powers which are so wonderful? What greater miracle do you want to see right before your eyes than the forms of human beings, animals, plants, and trees? When I went to see the big tree in California., I found that it was the greatest miracle and the biggest tree, 380 feet high and 15 feet in circumference. What can be more miraculous than the lion or tiger or elephant or human beings? Why should phenomenal minds seek miracles which are super-natural? There is no such thing as super-natural, as everything is of nature. Our ideas of the laws of nature are extremely narrow and limited, and anything that we cannot explain by our known laws, we call supernatural. But, when science of our world of known objects and laws becomes wider and larger, the universe or phenomenal everything becomes natural. So, to a wise man everything is natural, and there is no such thing as supernatural. But there are stages of consciousness like those of the animal, vegetable, mineral, and human ; then there are the super-human and godly saints ; then there is the Absolute, the Supreme Ego, which is like the Mother of all these various classes of manifestation, and it is the infinite source like the ocean.

If we can understand that divinity in the midst of all and feel that divinity in everything, then we have learned to see the

¹⁰ जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्ततः ।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥४९॥

Reality, and that knowledge of the Reality brings with it the imperishable result which is the attainment of freedom, perfection, and absolute peace and happiness, and that also makes us transcend all the laws of nature, because God Himself is not subject to any law. That which is subject to laws, must be limited by time and space and, if God is not, He cannot be limited by time and space. But when He appears in human form. He subjects Himself to these laws. It does not take a finite form, it will be impossible for any finite being to see, or think of, or get any benefit from such a manifestation. But in the background there is that infinite ocean, the manifestation being just as a lump of ice that floats in the ocean.

If you can imagine that in this etherial ocean, or in the infinite ocean of ether, there is a lump, condensed and solidified, then that lump may be called the divine manifestation, and every particle of it depends upon that eternal substance. So the manifestation of the Divinity in a human form is like the condensed or solidified portion of that infinite source of existence, intelligence, and bliss. It appears like a human being, but it is not human.

If God did not manifest Himself in a human form, human beings could not understand Him. Because we are human beings and our universe is human, and so we can understand God in a human form only. If God hangs in a tree in the form of a bat, that will not help us. If He walks in the form of a cow in the streets of New York, that will not help us. If He comes in our midst in a human form and lives with us and at the same time shows His greatness, mastery, wonderful knowledge, and wisdom, then we bow down to Him, worship Him, make Him our Ideal, and follow His path, which ultimately leads to the same divine or spiritual realization. That is what we have been doing all the time.

When we cannot get any manifestation of divinity, we worship a hero or a great man. See how many heroes and saints are worshipped in a Roman Catholic churches. It is the tendency of the human mind to worship greatness. Later on Sri Krishna will describe that wherever there is the manifestation of powers and divinity. We are not confined to any particular nation or time, because God is unlimited and is not bound by laws, nationality, time or space. So this path of renunciation

is adopted by those who understand this. In order to understand the divinity or God, we must feel the divinity within ourselves first, because if our spiritual eyes are not open, we misjudge and mistake the divinity in a human form, criticise him, find fault with him, call him human and perhaps do not understand any of his actions. But when we begin to feel the divinity within ourselves, then we can see, can understand, and can grasp the difference that exists between ordinary mortals and the divine manifestation "Freed from passion, fear and anger, absorbed in me, and depending on me, being purified by the fire of wisdom, many have attained to my being".¹¹

First of all, let us make our minds free from passion, fear, and anger. For, these three are the greatest obstacles, and later on we shall find that these three are the gates of hell, which is nothing but ignorance. The bottomless abyss of ignorance is hell. When we do not feel our divine nature, we are living in hell. At present this world is like hell. When we are seeking pleasures and comforts and living on the sense plane, we are living in hell. What can be worse than that? Misery, suffering and sorrow are the attendants of those whose minds are not free. But whose minds are freed from passion, fear, and anger and souls are absorbed in the divine Spirit, and not on relatives and friends, could they ever have the faith that they are not the children of the Supreme Being. These people have come into existence to play their parts and, having purified their minds and hearts by the fire of wisdom, they ultimately become one with the Supreme Being. But that cannot be obtained by those who are following the path which leads to worldliness.

Believe that and become conscious of the true nature of things. And this can be obtained by following that divine or spiritual path. The other path leads to continuous birth and rebirth, while the path which leads to freedom from rebirth, is supreme knowledge.

Karma Yoga is of two kinds: there is the performance of work or action for the attachment of earthly prosperity, and the performance of work for the purification of the heart.

¹¹ वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।

बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥४१००

They are two different things entirely. The wise ones perform acts and work simply for the purification of the mind, which means freedom from passion, fear and anger, and becoming unselfish. When these four things we have realized in ourselves by being free from passion, fear and anger, and selfishness, we are bound to see divinity, and we are bound to have peace and happiness in life. But those who follow the path which leads to worldliness, will not attain to that peace and happiness. Their eyes must open to the higher truths to see divinity within themselves as well as in all divine Incarnations.

CHAPTER XIV

PATH TO SALVATION

The path which leads to salvation is the most abstract. Some people have an idea that the path of freedom was introduced by Jesus the Christ, and we know that Sri Krishna lived about 1400 years before the birth of Christ and he said that the path was not introduced by him, but it existed from time immemorial. Many have reached perfection, being purified from passion, fear and anger, and "having their minds absorbed in me and depending entirely upon me, being purified by the fire of wisdom, have attained to my being".

Those who do attain to perfection, must be the favourites of God. Is that true? Has God any particular favourites? This idea is very common among the followers of Christianity. They feel and believe that there are some who may be called the elect, or favourites of God, and others are not. There are those who by His grace, attain to perfection very easily, and there are others born to suffer. But this idea is not known to the people of India. They reject this idea and do not care for it. Even at the ancient time Sri Krishna said to Arjuna that God had no one who might be called His favourite. He has neither pleasure, nor displeasure for certain deeds or certain persons or nations. He is free and above all ideas of partiality. Sri Krishna says: "Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever path, I reach him, all men are struggling in different paths which ultimately lead to me ; whosoever worships God in whatsoever form, and with whatsoever deeds, receive the objects of his desires."¹

All people do not worship God for the highest freedom. Most people do not care for the emancipation of the soul, or for the attainment of perfection. The majority of people worship God for the attainment of something tangible and to have some desires fulfilled, and we can classify those worshippers as

¹ ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तां स्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥४११॥

follows. Those who are suffering from troubles or pain or disease, worship God to have those removed. Their worship is not for the highest wisdom, and they do not care for perfection. They want to have these different objects of pain and suffering removed. Others worship for wealth, prosperity, and success in life, as we find it among the Roman Catholics. Many of these worshippers go to pray for children, or good husbands, or wives, or some prosperity, or success in life. This class of people will never reach perfection through that kind of worship, but they will have their desires fulfilled. Another class of people worship God for knowledge. They seek knowledge, and try to get that divine knowledge, or inspiration, or revelation, or higher knowledge, by which they can do something miraculous and thereby gain name and fame and help mankind. But the best of all the worshippers are those who worship God without having any special desire and through love, because they cannot help it. They find that God is the source of all happiness for all eternity.

All these various classes of worshippers worship through different motives and desires, and also with different objects of devotion. God is not partial to any one, but fulfils impartially the desires of His devotees. If we worship God and have devotional feelings, and direct these feelings towards God with an idea of getting prosperity and success, or for having difficulties removed, we will get it. Another who worship God for emancipation of the soul from the bondage of ignorance, feel the phenomenal character and know that these things do not last long, and are longing for unchangeable reality and eternal truth, will reach perfection. God is not responsible for the desires of the worshipper. So why do people not desire the highest? It appears that they are not ready for it and have not learned transitoriness of the phenomenal objects and so they are still attached to the objects of senses. They feel that these things are real and cannot live without them. They think that as long as they are in their material bodies, they must have some pleasures and comforts of life, and, consequently, they seek for them and devote their whole energy and life for attaining these things, and at last they get them. But after getting them, when their spiritual eyes are opened to the reality of things and come to know that they cannot bring

peace of mind and genuine happiness, they long for something higher and better. Then they really seek for that which is eternal and unchangeable. At that time they come to know that eternal peace will never be reached by any external or internal condition of body and mind

Ordinary people do not believe in the existence of such eternal peace and happiness, and so they seek them from outside. But, in truth, eternal happiness never comes from outside. We try to get happiness from outside by possessing this or that, but still we know that happiness does not come from that. We may get pleasure, but that temporary pleasure is not the same as the peaceful state of mind or soul. Ordinary people have no idea of happiness. They search for that something which they do not know what it is like, but when they cannot get it by coming in touch with the external objects of senses and possessing the different things of the phenomenal world, they get restless and tired and long for that something, not knowing what it is, but that something is nothing but happiness. The soul cannot be satisfied unless it has found the absolute happiness and peace, but we must not forget that it never comes from outside. Some people think that if external conditions change, they will have peace, but they are mistaken. Other things will come and take their place and make them restless. If we cannot rise above all phenomenal conditions, we must remember that we are struggling in vain for the highest unchangeable peace of mind

Another thing you will notice that the word, universality or universal charity, which was preached by Sri Krishna, conveys the idea that we should not fight with others, because they are worshipping some form of God under some particular name. But we must remember that all these faiths, included in different religions are like so many paths that lead to the same goal. They are like the radii in the circle which converge towards the common centre. The common centre of the universe is God. Whether you are a Christian, or a Mohammedan, or a Buddhist, it is no difference, but as long as you are worshipping God, whether under the name of Father in Heaven, or Buddha, or Allah, there is no difference. We give Him different names according to our different states and conceptions. But He is above all these names. He has neither particular name, nor

form, but still we imagine that He has this and that name or form. We give Him names and forms in our imagination. We find that the devotees worship God or gods conceptually designed by themselves. This may be surprising to many, but it is a fact

Vedanta says that we create God by giving some name, and imagining some form, according to our suitable ideas or conceptions of these forms and names which are nothing but the projections of our own thoughts. They are the objective images of the subjective mind. They are known as the anthropomorphic conception of God of those worshippers devoted to one particular form and name. Through ignorance we fight with others, because we do not follow our path and do not worship our ideal God. In fact, all these different names and forms of God are so many images, or so many expressions of that Absolute Being as I have said before, whether you worship God under the name of Father in Heaven, or not. If you worship God by giving him no name whatsoever, or call Him X and worship, the result of your worship will be just the same. If you call him matter, the result will be the same, and this idea you will find nowhere so wonderfully and clearly expressed and preached as in India. The result of such preaching is that there has never been any religious persecution in India. The Mohammedans, Christians, and different religionists invaded India and tried their best to convert the Hindus, but they never raised a sword against them, and never fought for religious beliefs and convictions. The Mohammedans killed thousands when they invaded India, but did not succeed in converting all the Hindus as they liked. When the Persians were driven out of Persia, they went to India. There are no Parsees in Persia, but you will find them in India, and they have been living there in India for centuries undisturbed. When the Christians were driven out of Palestine, they also went to India, and took shelter there. So amongst the Hindus there has never been religious persecution, and this is the result of this wonderful philosophy which teaches charity, universal love and tolerance, and which tells us that all religions are like so many paths which lead to one Infinite Being.

So, those who worship Allah, will reach perfection just in the same manner as the Christian, or the Hindu, or the Parsees

or the Buddhist do. "Why is it that people do not care for the realization of the highest wisdom and perfection?" Sri Krishna answers this question: "People who are attached to the objects of senses, desiring the fruits of their actions, worship God in order to get those results, and through their devotion and service, they quickly receive the results. And those results which are on this plane come to us more quickly than the results which are on the highest plane".² If you pray to God for the cure of a disease, you will get that result more quickly than if you pray to God for absolute emancipation of the soul. Emancipation does not come quickly, because it is much higher and it requires tremendous devotion and whole-hearted and whole-souled love for the Divine Being. Therefore we must have our souls one-pointed, and must exercise patience, perseverance for a long time, and must never get impatient. But if we pray for an ordinary thing of the world, we shall get that very quickly. Most people have not that kind of patience; they want something tangible, and they are so impatient that if they are suffering from certain difficulties, they want to have them removed right away. They can concentrate on such phenomenal things very strongly, and that strong concentration brings them things more quickly than the highest things beyond our reach.

Perfection comes to those who understand the oneness that exists between the individual and the Supreme Spirit. When we can feel the truth and realize the truth which was expressed by all great seers of truth of all countries, we are free. When we realize in our souls that we are parts of the Divinity, nay, we are one with the Divinity, we make ourselves free from the bondage of delusion. First of all, we must know what Divi-

² Similarly Sankara raised the question.

‘यदि तवेश्वरस्य रागादिदोषाभावात् सर्वप्राणिषु अनुजिघृक्षायां तुल्यायां सर्वफलदानसमर्थे च त्वयि सति, बाधुदेवः सर्वमिति ज्ञानेनैव मुमुक्षुः सन्तः कस्मात् त्वामेव सर्वे न प्रतिपद्यन्ते इति शृणु तत्र कारणम्,—काङ्क्षन्त इति ।’

Anandagiri's glossary also echoed the same.

³ काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।

क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजाः ॥४११२

nity is, and then realize our being as one with the Universal Being. When we have realized that, we are ready for absolute emancipation, freedom, and perfection, and this state of freedom or perfection is signified by the word, salvation. In India, salvation does not mean going to heaven and enjoying certain pleasures for a certain length of time. That is not absolute salvation, except in a relative sense, salvation from suffering and grief, but in its absolute sense, salvation means freedom from all bonds and limitations. The soul is trying to manifest its divine powers through limitations of time and space, and mind, senses, and body. When these limitations or adjuncts (*upadhis*) are removed, the soul which is potentially divine, becomes actually so, and all the divine qualities latent in the soul, begin to flow and manifest themselves. He then becomes conscious of his divine nature, but the seekers after that kind of perfection, or freedom, are very few.

God grants unto us all the things that we want or desire. Here we must remember that God fulfills our desires and prayers, not through partiality, or through grace, but through the law of cause and sequence. Whatever we desire, we get and our prayers bring the things as the results of our prayers. These results are nothing but the reactions of our own actions, either mental, or physical. If we give certain things in the name of God or of somebody else, that action must bring some reaction sometime, and we must remember that every reaction is of similar nature as the action itself. If the action be good, the reaction will be good to us, and if the action be wicked, the reaction will bring pain, sorrow, suffering, disease or loss of property or health.

All these sufferings and sorrows are the results of wicked deeds or acts, whether done in this incarnation, or in the previous one. We must consider that these individuals are born with certain tendencies and manifest certain qualifications, and they are the results of their previous actions. These are not our first and last chances that we have got in order to attain to the highest state of realization.

We see in our ordinary life that some are born with certain good tendencies and others hate that which is good. Some do virtuous deeds and hate to do anything that is wrong, and others love to do that which is wicked. Why is it? Because,

we are born with such tendencies. Is God or are the parents responsible for this? No; we ourselves are responsible and are reaping the result of what we did in our previous incarnations. We must learn to think of this and that is a great thing which we learn in Vedanta. From the beginning of the cyclic evolution we see that human beings are divided into different classes according to their deeds and qualifications and these classes we cannot destroy, and they are known as castes (*jati*) in India. So Krishna said: "The four-fold caste has been created by me according to the difference of qualities and actions".⁴ We can divide the human beings of all countries into four principal classes; there may be many subdivisions.

The first class includes those extremely spiritual, who possess self-control and control of mind and senses, who have prayers and desires to do good to the world and help mankind, and have disinterested love for others. They are born with these tendencies and qualifications. These belong to the first class. The people belonging to this class are the Brahmins. The second class includes those who have tremendous power for work, not absolutely unselfish work but they work either for their own self, or for the family, or for society or nation, or for their country. All the great philanthropists, warriors, and politicians belong to the second class. They try to protect people. They are the fighters, and are ready to defend the rights of people, to remove all the obstacles that stand in the way of the rights of others. They are called Kshatriya. They have

‘चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ॥४॥१३

Castes are divided into four, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. The leaders of the society divided these classes of caste according to qualifications and actions. Qualification or qualities are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, and these qualities are predominant among the classes of castes. Sankara said in the commentary:

“गुणाः सत्तरजस्तमांसि, तत्र सात्त्विकस्य सत्तप्रधानस्य ब्राह्मणस्य शमोदमस्तप-
इत्यादीनि (कर्माणि); सत्तोपसर्जनरजःप्रधानस्य क्षत्रियस्य सौर्यतेजःप्रभृतीनि कर्माणि;
तमःउपसर्जनरजःप्रधानस्य वैश्यस्य कृष्यादीनि कर्माणि; रसउपासर्जनतमःप्रधानस्य शूद्रस्य
शुश्रूषैव कर्म—इत्येवं गुणकर्मविभागशः चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टइत्यर्थः”। (मया ईश्वरेण
सृष्टमुत्पादितम्—‘ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीत्’ इत्यादि श्रुतेः) ।

not much spirituality, but still they possess a little self-control, a little of all those higher powers but not much. The third class to which the Vaisyas belong, includes those who are merchants and work for earthly prosperity and earthly success. The fourth class includes those born to serve, and who cannot understand anything higher and are intellectually very poor, and whose spiritual eyes are not open. This class of people is ready to serve, and through service it will get to the higher stages of evolution gradually. This class is known as Sudra.

These four classes were the foundation of the caste system in India, and the caste system is hereditary. This is known as *chaturvarna*. Originally this division of the people into four classes was according to their qualifications and powers. Neither society, nor community, can live without having these divisions. In this country (America), there is the same difference, but it has not become hereditary yet. If the nation were two thousand years old, it would have been different. Even now we find in Philadelphia they trace the geneology. In England, you will find more of that sort of thing. Those who born of noble parents, have a position in society and have greater opportunities. But this country (America) being young you cannot expect that. If we come back after two thousands years, we will see that this country has developed a caste system, perhaps just like that we have in India.

These tendencies and qualities force us to do certain things in certain ways. We have desires in our minds, and according to those desires we worship God to have those desires fulfilled. But God is not responsible for this. I may be born of a lower class, but after death a man may come back as one extremely spiritual and then he will belong to the first class. But each individual soul possesses all these higher qualities and certain powers. We cannot manifest all in one incarnation, because the space of life is too short for reaching all the different grades of moral, intellectual or spiritual evolution. We are not born with the same tendencies or qualities. As two faces are not alike, so two minds are not alike. Two souls are not on the same plane of evolution, and that is the reason why we find so many diversities and inequalities amongst ourselves. These diversities cannot be explained by those who believe in the one birth theory that God created souls and minds to reap

the results of certain acts. They were forced to do, and were created by the Supreme Being to reap the results. The more rational, scientific and logical explanation is that we are born with different tendencies. These tendencies did not come from our parents, but they came from ourselves. We did not inherit these from our parents. So what would force us to inherit these? Our parents did not show the same tendencies and desires. So that explanation does not hold good. On the contrary, that explanation makes us creatures of our parents. Parents are not responsible for them except as long as they are not able to stand upon their own feet and are obliged to have help. They cannot change our characters, or put in new qualities from outside, if we are not ready to receive them and if we do not have the predisposition to get them. Parents are wanting children for their own amusement. They are trying to have their children as the best in the world. In most cases, however, they become the worst in spite of all their attempts. The cause of this is the tendencies which are the results of our previous acts done in previous incarnations.

Although God has divided human beings according to their tendencies and gives the results of all these acts and fulfils their desires and prayers, still God is above all works. He does not do any work as we do, nor is He bound by the works like ordinary mortals. When God incarnates Himself, He performs works. He works all the time, but at the same time He is above all works.⁵ He is not like an ordinary mortal. It is very difficult to understand the difference.

"The works do not pollute the knower for the results of works. He who recognizes me as such, becomes free from the bondage of work."⁶ God creates, but do you think that He has a desire he would not be perfect. Because every desire means wanting something, and that means liking in something, which means a kind of grief, or a restless condition of mind. God

⁵ तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्वद्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥४१३॥

Sankara said: "यद्यपि मायासंव्यवहारेण तस्य कर्मणः कर्तारमपि सन्तं मां परमार्थतौ विद्धि अकर्तारमतएव अव्ययमसंसारिणं च मां विद्धि ॥"

⁶ न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।

इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥४१४॥

could not be the creator of the world, in the sense that we have learned from the Christian Bible.

Why did God create?—this question rises even in the minds of the best thinkers. Did He want creation? If He did, He was not perfect. If He did not have any desire, He could not create. These questions are most difficult to solve. We cannot ordinarily answer these questions with satisfaction. The idea of creation has, therefore, been rejected by the great thinkers of India, and the idea of evolution has taken its place. The evolution of the eternal energy comes off periodically, and then involution comes after it. Every cycle of evolution is followed by a cycle of involution, and that is again followed by a cycle of evolution. This is the natural law. All the activities found in the universe proceed from the Divine Being, and still the Divine Being is above all activities.

This can be understood very easily if we know the true nature of our soul. We are performing all the acts of our bodies and of our minds, but, at the same time, there is something in us which is not moved by action, which is above all actions, and which is never changed or affected in any shape or manner by the mental or physical activities in ourselves. We must know (that we cannot understand what it means) that God does all these things, yet He does not do anything. He has created the sun, the moon, and the stars, and started the act of evolution. In fact, He is doing everything. We cannot move our hands, or talk, or hear, or do any action, if it were against the will of God. The will of God is constantly performing all actions or works that human beings or living creatures can do. The wind could not blow if it were against the will of God, because all these different forces are nothing but the expressions of that one universal force which is called the will of God. The religionists call it the will of God; the scientists call it mechanical power or force or energy, but both are the same thing. Force is force in the universe and we call it will-power, because will-power is the highest and best power. Mechanical forces can be controlled by the will-power, so the will-power is highest or greatest power. We attribute that highest power to the Divine power, and call it will. Gravitation and attraction, propulsion and motion of all kinds, are nothing but the expressions of the Divine will-power of the cosmic mind.

If we understand it in this way, we find that God is tremendously active, because His will is working incessantly, yet He is unmoved by His will-power.

We have will-power, but will-power cannot bind us, as we can rise above our will-power. We can stop or check our will-power and go to such a state where there will be no manifestation of will-power, and from there, if we see and look at the Divine Being, we understand how the Divine Being is not affected or disturbed by His universal will-power. It is the immovable something dwelling in the midst of the movable, or the changeable. Our true nature does not do any work. Our minds are working. Really mind is the medium through which the soul manifests its powers on the mental plane. Senses are working, but the knower of all these works in movement is higher and separate from all these activities of mind and senses.

The soul may be compared to a lotus leaf, and the will-power may be compared to a drop of water on that lotus leaf. The drop of water does not reach that leaf at all, although it is in it. It cannot affect it in any shape or manner. So the will-power dwells in the Divine Being or the Soul, but at the same time it does not affect or disturb the Cosmic Being. We may think of Him as a tremendous worker and creator, but the moment we begin to see that work means limitation, work is impossible without being subject to time and space and law of causation, and so we change from that idea. How could God be limited by those things? If He were limited, He would not be the Supreme Being.

Sri Krishna says: "The works do not taint me, nor have I any desire for the results of works; he who so recognises me, attains to perfection and freedom knowing the secret of the seekers after freedom of ancient times, do work".⁷ So, knowing the actions that were performed by the ancients, we must learn this secret and philosophy of work. We must try to see that immoveable Self is unattached and undisturbed by the activities of our mind, senses, and body, and with this knowledge we must do the work. We cannot rest in absolute quietness even for a second; it would be impossible for us to live like

⁷ एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।

कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥४।१५

that. From the cyclical period, the perceptions and conceptions of thoughts are also known as acts or works. We may not do any physical labour, but we cannot stop the activities of bodies and minds. When these exist how can we have absolute rest? But if we can see that something which remains always unmoved inspite of the functions of mind and body, then we have realized the unchangeable truth, the Divine Spirit dwelling in our souls

We may worship God through certain names and forms and through worship we may attain to that knowledge gradually after a long time, but the wise men are those who have realized this from the very beginning, and have learned the laws of the universe and also the method by which the divine will works in the universe, and how the Divine Being, the Supreme Spirit, is above all works, physical and mental

That person has reached the state of realization and attained absolute peace and happiness, and has reached the state which is called freedom. Freedom does not mean simply not doing physical labour or not being disturbed by ordinary conditions, but it is the realization of that oneness between the individual soul and our true nature, the Divine Spirit, and that is perfection (*moksha*). If we are in the state of ignorance and have not reached that realization of oneness, we should work for the purification of our hearts or minds. All these works which we are doing, will purify our hearts if we do not seek the results of these works, if we can work for work's sake, and when the heart is purified, the higher realization will come. And if we have attained to that wisdom, even then we should work and help others, to set an example in society, so that others may not become lazy and waste their energy, but through work will attain to the highest goal.

All the great seers of truth worked to help mankind without having any special desire for their own individual comforts and benefits of any kind. If we have this body and it is going to last for fifty or sixty years and if we have attained to that wisdom and peace in our minds, what is the use of keeping this body in a corner of the room? Let it go into the battle-field of the world and fight, so that others may fight and gain wonderful results. Gain mastery over yourselves and environments and ultimately reach the highest goal of perfection.

So, as long as we live, we will have to do some kind of work and that work should be for the benefit of others, if we have attained to peace and happiness. And if we have not attained to peace and happiness, we should work for the purification of our hearts, for self-control, for mastery over ourselves, for wisdom, and for universal love for all mankind, and gradually we will be able to realize the unchangeable Truth which is dwelling within us

CHAPTER XV

WORK FOR WORK'S SAKE

Sri Krishna says here: "Even the wise men are sometimes deluded by this fact, what action is and what is inaction. I shall teach thee that action by which thou shalt be able to be free from either".¹ What is action then, and what is inaction? Of course, ordinary people regard activity of the body as action, and inactivity as inaction. What we ordinarily call action and inaction is right from our ordinary standpoint, but there is a superior meaning. If we look at the activities of our body and mind and look minutely and also study our true nature, we shall be able to find that what we ordinarily call inaction, is not absolute inaction. There is also a degree of activity. There is no doubt that even in the midst of inactivity, there can be found something not absolutely inactive.

Sri Krishna has further said: "Thou shouldst know what proper action is and what improper action is, and thou shouldst also know what inaction really is, because the nature of action or work or *karma* is indestructible".² In fact, improper actions are those which are prohibited by the scriptures of all nations, and proper actions are those which are allowed by the scriptures,³ and inaction is just sitting quietly without doing any kind of work, and this is the ordinary meaning. But what

¹किं कर्म किमकर्मातीति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।

तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयेऽशुभात् ॥४१६॥

The word अशुभ means संसार i.e. worldliness or *maya* that entangles men in the den of delusion.

²कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यञ्च विकर्मणः ।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धवं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥४१७॥

Sankara also raised the question.

"नचैत् त्वया मन्तव्यं कर्म नाम देहादिचेष्टा लोकप्रसिद्धम् अकर्म च तदक्रिया तूष्णीमासनं किं तत्र बोद्धव्यम् इति ।"

³"कर्मणः शास्त्रविहितस्य * * तथा अकर्मणश्च तूष्णीम्भावस्य बोद्धव्यमप्यस्तीति त्रिष्वपि अव्याहारः कर्तव्यः ।"—शाङ्करभाष्यम्

kind of action will bring us freedom or emancipation of the soul from the bondage of mind, body, and attachment to the world? That is the point which Sri Krishna wishes to discuss. Sri Krishna tries to explain what kind of action will make us live in this world and at the same time will be the means of the attainment of emancipation of the soul. We cannot live without doing some kind of work, as we have seen in previous chapters. Even the maintenance of the body will be impossible, if we sit absolutely still, and we cannot do it. We will have to live in this world, and perform works, both physical and mental. But the question is whether these actions will help us in attaining to the highest goal of our life. These questions do not arise in Western minds. They do not try to know the philosophy of work. But this question is largely discussed in India, and India is the only country where you will find such a system of philosophy: how to be free from the bonds of works and direct our work of body and mind towards attaining to the goal of life.

The first thing we should know is what the goal of life is. This is knowledge of the unity of the individual soul with the universal Spirit which is the Reality of the universe in order to transcend the limitations of body and mind. How can we attain it? Another thing is, how to be free from the continuous flow of birth and rebirth on this plane, or on any other plane. If you do not believe in the rebirth of the soul, this question will not arise in your mind. If, however, you think that this is the first and last time you have come to this world, you will try to make best use of the present and live comfortably, and you will not hesitate to injure others. Then you will be disposed to think that there will be no harm in doing immoral acts if you can gain something for enjoyment by doing wicked acts. Then why should you not do it? There is thus no reason for you to live a virtuous life. Some people say that from a utilitarian standpoint we ought to be moral, but they would not care for posterity. They would say, let us be extremely selfish and take care of ourselves, enjoy our lives and pass away. This will be the attitude if we do not believe in the continuity of our existence after death.

The question of immortality does not arise in India. That question does not arise in the Hindu minds, because they take

it for granted that it is impossible for the soul to be annihilated after death. It is like an axiomatic truth and we must take it for granted. There are plenty of arguments, scientific and philosophical, in support of this established truth. Books have been written on this subject. These ideas of immortality and pre-existence of the soul as well as its reincarnation are floating in the atmosphere of India. The people of India imbibe these ideas, and these ideas are a part and parcel of their nature. We can never for a moment think of our own annihilation or destruction. Existence can never become non-existence. So when the goal or ideal of our life, which is the unity of the individual soul with the universal Spirit, or the unity of true nature of our soul with its relation to the universal Spirit, is realized, we know and say that we have accomplished everything. Unity means here realization of oneness with the *Atman*.

The question is: how are we going to accomplish this? Sri Krishna teaches us that it is accomplished through work as worship. There are other paths like the paths through devotion, discrimination, etc, but, in fact, when we realize or understand the true meaning of '*karma*' which means activity, it includes all devotional feelings, discrimination, intellectual activity, mental activity, and sense activity. All these are included under that '*karma*', literally meaning action.

But ordinary people perform works for results, and get results. Very few can work without seeking results, and the consequence is that those who seek results, will get them. They will not be able to be free from that law of action and reaction, or cause and sequence, but so long they are not free from all laws, there is the longing for freedom. That longing will not stop and will not lead our souls to the realization of absolute freedom. How are we going to transcend the law of action and reaction, which has brought us to this world and will bring us again to this plane? We ought to solve this problem for ourselves, because we have come to this plane? We ought to solve this problem for ourselves, because we have come to this world of desires and action. All these actions which we are doing, will be the means of bringing freedom to us, or they will bring us back to this plane to do the same things over again. So the nature of actions are not the same.

Those who like to do these same things, will do them and will not care for the solution of those problems. But a time will inevitably come when even these people will have their eyes opened and will begin to see things in a better way in their true perspective and realize how the soul continues to exist and how we ought to transcend all the binding laws. They would feel themselves miserable, unhappy, and restless, and would long for absolute peace and happiness which cannot come in the state of bondage. Our soul, therefore, must be absolutely free from all laws. The way to such a realization through Karma Yoga, is described here.

This is the most difficult verse in the whole *Gita*. It contains the philosophy of work. "He who can see inaction in action and action in inaction is the wisest of all mankind, devout and a true performer of all actions".⁴ All this reads like a puzzle. How incongruous it is when you think you will have to see action in inaction and inaction in action! Is it possible to see action in inaction or activity where there is no activity?

Ordinarily it appears to be very incongruous, but when we study the subject attentively, we find that it is not so incon-

‘कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥४॥१८

Acharya Sankara explained this *sloka* in two different ways in his commentary:

(क) देहाद्याश्रयं कम आत्मनि अध्यारोप्य अहं कर्ता समेतत् कर्म मयास्य फलं भोक्तव्यं इति च ।* *

(ख) अयं श्लोकोऽन्यथा व्याख्यातः कैश्चित् ।* * तथा नित्याकरणे त्वकर्मणि कर्म यः पश्येत् * * ।

Anandagiri said.

गतिरहितेषु तस्य गतिदर्शनवत् प्रकृते ब्रह्मण्यविक्रिये कर्मदर्शनं सक्रिये च द्वैतप्रपञ्चे गतिमत्सु चैत्रादिषु * * तेन तस्य विपरीतदर्शनस्य निरसनार्थं, भगवद्-वचनमिति दार्ष्टान्तिकं निगमयति—एवमित्यादिना ।* *

Really there is no activity in the actionless *Atman* or Brahman, but men through ignorance impose the idea of action upon the *Atman* or Brahman. The wise men know that the *Atman* or Brahman transcends nescience or *maya*, and so they realize the *Atman* as actionless, pure and immute (*kutastha*).

grous. In the first place, we must know that our bodies, sense organs, senses, mind, and intellect are constantly in activity. Some kind of function is going on in our system in some form or other. When we perform any kind of action, proper or improper, moral or immoral, sanctioned or not sanctioned by scriptures, there is activity. On the other hand, when we do not perform any work and sit quietly, even then there is mental activity. The mind has not stopped working even in sleep. We may be dreaming of many things, just building castles in the air, even this should be counted as activity and work. These works will result in chain of actions and reactions, and they must bring in things either beneficial or injurious to us. When one says: "I am doing this work, or you are doing that work", that thought means activity and it has a '*karma*'. Every thought is a product of the activity of the thinking principle or thinking ego, and as thoughts are not separate from the thinking mind's action, those will produce certain results. If we take the meaning of action in broad and universal sense, then we include all the activities of body, senses, and mind as action. But Sri Krishna says that we will have to see inaction where there is action. So we will have to realize that there is no activity of any kind, physical, mental, or intellectual in inaction or *akarma*. Now is there any such thing in the universe which is absolutely actionless, or which remains without activity?

That question is very difficult for ordinary Western minds, because the Western minds think that the individual souls or egos are always active. And if there be anything beyond their conception of the individual soul which is absolutely inactive or beyond activity, they do not care for it. In Anglo-Saxon language, the soul is called an active soul. It is the ego with force and activities. But in the midst of that active soul, there is something which is beyond all actions. Ordinary minds do not care for it. They think it will put us in a state of indifference and laziness. Consequently they never have peace, because peace and happiness come to that soul which has realized its true and absolute nature. When we realize the nature of our egos, we find that all these thoughts, ideas, and feelings are constantly changing i.e. are coming and going. But there is something standing like a witness over all these ideas and

thoughts, and that witness is constant like the lord of intelligence. It does not change. One thought may rise and pass away and its place may be taken by another, but the knower of thoughts and ideas is constant. The knower of all the activities of our bodies and minds of the present time is the same as the knower who was twelve or fifteen years ago. It is the same knower who existed in yourself when you were a baby, is the same knower today. He has not changed. His attributes are ever lasting adjuncts.

The mind, intellect, and thinking principle, etc. are all subject to evolution, but the knower, through whom we are conscious of our thoughts and ideas and different states of existence, is the same and is, therefore, beyond all activities. If we can see that truth in the midst of all our activities of the mind, senses, intellect, and body, then we have realized something different from that of the ordinary people. If we do not forget that there is a constant something in us beyond all experiences of sorrow, suffering, and misery as well as beyond every condition, favourable or unfavourable, that something will be the refuge of our souls. If our souls are not disturbed by actions and their results and if we can think (with full conviction) of that which does not change, then instantly we will have real peace and happiness.

When you wake up from a dream and begin to feel differently in spite of all your troubles and sufferings and unpleasant circumstances, you just think of yourself as the knower of these different things. Clouds are passing and taking different shapes remaining for sometime and disappearing afterwards, but the sky is just the same, and only the clouds are changing constantly. In a like manner the clouds of ideas are changing constantly in the skies of the true Self, and you are the true and unchangeable Self. If you forget the existence of the sky or the space and fix your attention on the clouds constantly passing, or if you get attached to some particular cloud, when it passes away, you become sorrowful and unhappy. But if you think of the sky or the space only which stands unchangeable in the midst of the changes of clouds, you may find some consolation and happiness. Then that cloud or similar clouds may come again, but you will not feel disturbed in the least. But ordinary minds are deluded, because they cannot see that

unchangeable and immortal something in us. Anything that changes, cannot be immortal, because immortality means unchangeable reality. If you wish to be immortal, find out what is unchangeable in yourself. When we realize the meaning of the word, death, we will see that death means change and that which changes from one form into another, is subject to death. The immortal is that something which is not subject to death or change. Our immortal nature, being above all activity, mind, sense, and physical conditions, is above all laws. In all the actions of body and mind, and we must see inaction. And again we must see action in inaction, even when we sit quietly. Although we are physically not doing anything and mentally feeling that we are not doing anything, even that consciousness is some kind of activity. So there is no absolute inaction even when we are not doing any physical work. Now what is ordinarily called inaction, is action or activity, however minute that activity may be.

After seeing the difference between action and reaction, if we are engaged in any kind of work, we should do it. If not, we should not seek any particular work. By that kind of knowledge we shall become free from all attachments to the world. We will not have any desire for ordinary things of the world, if we remember our true nature which is unchangeable and beyond all actions of body and mind.

When our unchangeable nature is identified with the changes of mind, intellect, sense powers, and bodies, we become material and subject to the laws and conditions of the world and thus lose our freedom. That which is in a state of pure inaction, or absolutely above all action, is the Reality of the universe. The Reality of the universe does not change, and all the activities that we see in the midst of phenomena, are like superimpositions upon that unchangeable Reality. The Reality then appears like something changeable, but, in fact, it is not changeable. It does not appear so to the true nature of our soul, but it appears only to the ego which is active. Activity is realized in connection with that which is active. But if we go beyond all activities, there we find no trace of action or motion, and every activity ceases there. But we do not lose our individuality or identity. We remain just the same. But we separate the Reality from that which appears to be real. He

who knows this fundamental truth, is the wisest of all. His heart and soul are concentrated upon the Reality which is unchangeable, and, therefore, he is the seer of absolute Truth. He is free and emancipated. He is known as a sage.

"He who so endeavours, and is free from the impulse of desire and whose actions have been burned by the fire of wisdom, is called a sage by the wise man".⁵ The word, sage, means a seer of Truth, or is one who has realized the Truth and reached Godconsciousness. His works are all free from desires. He is free from purposes which cause those desires. Desires always proceed from some purposes or motives. The motives being the foundation of desires, we cherish these desires, and when they become very strong, they take the form of impulse and force our bodies into action and we reap the results of these actions on account of those desires. So the wise man is one who performs works free from desires and purposes which cause those desires, and who performs normal deeds without any purpose. If he is engaged in any worldly action, he does so with a view to setting an example before the masses. In fact, he does not need to work for his own purpose.

We must discriminate whether he (the wise man) is working for himself, or for the good of others. If it be for the good of others, it is not with a selfish purpose. If he has renounced his worldly life, he performs deeds only for bodily maintenance, just to keep the body alive. He is like one 'whose actions, good and bad, are consumed in the fire of wisdom'⁶ The fire of wisdom is the true knowledge of the realization of action and reaction. Him the wise, who know Brahman, call the real sage.

So we understand what our ideal should be in the midst of action, if we live in the world. He who has realized inaction in action, does not say, 'I am doing this', because he cannot see it. He always uses the words I, me and mine in the

⁵ यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।

ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥४।१९

⁶ Sankara said in the commentary:

“प्रवृत्तेन चेत् लोकसंग्रहार्थं निवृत्तेन चेत् जीवनमात्रार्थं, तत् ज्ञानाग्निदग्ध-
कर्माणं ।” * *

sense of Reality and not as the ordinary person, who identifies his physical self with the true nature of the Self.

The wise man is above all this. If he lives in the world in the midst of the people, he may not maintain this idea for all the time, but in his soul he realizes constantly that he is that witness and the knower of all activities, and, consequently, he is never sorrowful or miserable like a ordinary worldly man. The wise man whose actions have been burned by the fire of wisdom, has attained to freedom. Sri Krishna has pronounced his teachings on the highest ideal of action, which would lead our souls to the blissful abode of freedom or emancipation from the degrading bondage of laws and conditions of mind and body. He has described that ideal of Karma Yoga in these verses.

Sri Krishna has said that first we must see and perform our works, being free from the impulse of desire, and must burn our actions by the fire of wisdom, and then what should we do? "Having abandoned the attachment to the fruits of works, even content, and being dependent on none, though engaged in action, he doeth not".⁷ If he constantly feels himself as the unchangeable reality, the Knower and witness, the soul cannot have any attachment to the fruits of works, because the attachment to the fruits of works proceed from the sense of 'I', which is active, relative, and phenomenal. The ordinary ego is

‘तत्का कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः ॥४।२०

Sankara said :

“ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्मत्वात् तदीयं कर्म अकर्मैव सम्पद्यते ।” * *
“कर्मणि तत्फले च सङ्गरहिततया स्वप्रयोजनाभावात् लोकसंग्रहाय पूर्ववत् कर्मणि प्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित् करोति ।* * विदुषा क्रियमाणं कर्म परमार्थतोऽकर्मैव तस्य निष्क्रियात्मदर्शनसम्पन्नत्वात् ।”

Anandagiri said:

“यथोक्तं ज्ञानं कूटस्थात्मदर्शनं. तेन स्वरूपभूतं सुखं साक्षादनुभूय कर्मणि तत्फले सङ्गमपास्य, विषयेषु निरपेक्षश्चेष्टे विद्वानित्याह ।”

phenomenal, but the true nature of the ego is absolutely eternal. The ordinary ego becomes attached to the fruits of works as long as a man thinks that he is the doer or performer of action. He who performs the action, is the reaper of the result. As long as we have the thought that we have done this work, we must have results and he who has abandoned the thought that he is doing something, he will remain unaffected by this results. 'It is the will of God' a Bhakta would say, but a Karmi would say, 'it is the mind or sense power which is doing these things'. The main point is the renunciation of one's individual will. You will have to resign your will to the will of the Lord of the universe, and that is the source of power. So resign yourself to that universal will.

We know that before the crucifixion Christ's heart was sorrowful ; he was unhappy at the thought of that moment of extreme trial, and he went alone and prayed, "Let this cup pass away if it be possible, three times he prayed, but he had no peace in his mind. The third time he said, "Lord, Thy will be done". He at once came to that absolute renunciation and then he had peace.

In that state of renunciation and thought, if a Bhakta comes to that realization which is above all activities, and if a Karma Yogi comes to the same state by seeing that the Knower or *Atman* is above all changes of body and mind, both become contented. They become unconcerned about whatever happens to the bodies. For they are not the bodily structure ; the bodies may be cut to pieces, or they may be burned to ashes, but their true selves are not affected in the least. The material body will die and it is constantly changing. The Bhakta, or the Karma Yogi, is dependent on none. One who has not realized his true Self, is dependent on others. He fears and says: "What will become of me, if I do not do this or that. If I lose my health what will become of me?" All these are foolish thoughts that proceed from weakness and ignorance of our true nature of the self. The wise one who has realized his true Self, may be left alone in the wilderness and may go without food for days, but he remains absolutely self-composed. There may be food or not, what is the difference? The food sustains the body and not the Self, and if that is not to be found, he does not change his true nature even then. He is the unaffected knower of that state of

starvation. He is not disturbed by the feeling of starvation, because he has separated himself from the feeling and, therefore, his strength is not the physical strength, or the mental strength, or the strength of wealthy men who can command respect by the power of wealth. He may die of starvation, but his death is a great power or strength in the world. Even the extreme moment of starvation would not affect him. He is in tune with the Divine. In the world, you do not generally see that kind of strength anywhere. It is an expression of something unusual, and wherever there is anything unusual and extraordinary above the ordinary expression of human minds, there is the manifestation of the spiritual power of the Divine Being.

Such a wise man who has abandoned the attachment to the fruits of work, is ever content, and is dependent upon none. Although he is engaged in action, he does not do anything, because he knows himself as the witness who is above all activity. He who can see action in inaction, has realized the true nature of action. He is, by virtue of that realization, free from action, and he renounces the world and engages in no action.

On the other hand, there may be a person who performed an action, but have since obtained a right knowledge of the Self, or there may be a person who has done some kind of work, and in the midst of it may have come to the realization of his true Self. He may, or may not, abandon all works. On the other hand, there may be a person who may continue to do the action as before, with a view to setting an example to the world at large and having no selfish end in view. Such a man really does nothing and his action is equivalent to inaction, since all his action is consumed by the fire of knowledge. So you see that the wise man first abandons the attachment to the fruits of works, and by the spirit of abandonment, although he is engaged in the actions, yet by virtue of his realization, he accomplishes the highest end of Karma Yoga and reaches the ideal of action or work.

Some people may ask: "Should he give up all the works that sustain his body?" So in this verse, Sri Krishna explains how he should live.

Sri Krishna says: "Being free from desire and with his mind and self controlled, and having relinquished all his possessions and doing dispassionately only the actions of the body, he

obtains no evil".⁸ He will support the body by getting those things absolutely necessary for its sustenance, and beyond that he will not go. Though he performs the actions of the body, yet he will not have any attachment to the body. If he takes care of his body like an ordinary person who has attachment to the body, there will be no difference, but the wise man will always remember that this body is the instrument of the true Self.

He must be contented with what he obtains without effort or request. Whatever he gets by chance, pleases him, and he is perfectly satisfied. If he does not receive anything, he is not less satisfied. He always rises above the pairs of opposites, like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery and all other pairs of opposites. These opposites bind those souls which are identified with the body, mind, and sense powers. But the knower, the witness, the true Self, is above these pairs of opposites. Rising above these, free from disturbing feelings, though some person gets something which we have not got, we ought not to have jealousy or feeling against that person.

Why do we have these disturbing feelings? Because, we are attached to our material conditions. The moment you give up this attachment to the body and mind, you will rise above all disturbing feelings. You will not bother about other persons becoming wealthy and happy and getting comforts and luxuries of life. You will rather delight in offering to others what little you possess. Everybody tries to get something, but very few want to give away that which is absolute necessary for his own life. Can you give to another that which is dearest to you? If you can, you are ready for the highest truth. Full of equanimity in success and failure, he will constantly work. Success and failure have little difference for him. The work itself is its own reward. We should not have to work for something which will come in future. Work for work's sake that is the ideal. What results may follow, do not matter to him. If you have the feel-

⁸ निराशार्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥४।२१

‘शारीरं’ शरीरस्थितिमात्रप्रयोजनं ‘केवलं’ तत्रापि अभिमानवर्जितं ‘कर्म’ कुर्वन्
etc. —Sankara.

ing that you cannot live without doing this kind of work, then go on doing this. Why should we think of success or failure? Whether it comes or goes, we must do our duty unconcerned about reward or punishment.

That man who has realized his true Self, is immortal. Such a man does not care for success or failure. Though he is acting, he is not bound by the law of action and reaction. So you see the way by the help of which we can get out of these laws of activities in our life. A Sannyasin lives in that way.⁹ He is contented with what he gets and does not care for anything else. He takes care of his body, for through that body he can do certain work which will be beneficial to the world. You may ask whether he should accept any offering which is given to him. If that offering be simply for the sustenance of the body, or for something good in connection with the body, he should accept it ; but in the absence of such an offering, he will not feel miserable and will not long for that kind of thing.¹⁰

The works of the sage whose attachment is gone, who is liberated and whose mind is established in true knowledge of the Supreme, are like sacrifices.¹¹ His works are like free offerings to the world. His whole action is dissolved and he is free from action and its results. So a true sage reaches the ideal of *karma* by doing this kind of selfless work. But you see, that knowledge of action and inaction is necessary in doing the right kind of work.

If, however, you believe in God, do the work for Him. Do everything, or anything for Him only. When you go to sleep,

⁹ (a) Vide the glossary of Anandagiri.

(b) एतादृशोऽपि प्रारब्धवशात् 'शरोरं' शरीरस्थितिमात्रप्रयोजनं कौपीणाच्छादनादिग्रहण-मिश्राटनादिरूपं यतिं प्रति * * 'कर्म' कार्याकर्म वाचिकं मानसञ्च तदपि 'केवलं कर्तृतामिमानश्चर्यं पराध्यारोपितकर्तृत्वेन 'कुर्वन्' परमार्थतोऽकर्तात्मदर्शनात् 'नाप्नोति' न प्राप्नोति 'क्लिबिषं' धर्माधर्मफलभूतमनिष्टं संसारं * * ।

—Vide Madhusudan Sarasvati's commentary.

¹⁰ यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥४१२२

¹¹ गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितयेतसः ।

यज्ञावाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥४१२३

think you are sleeping for Him. When you eat, think you are eating for Him. When you walk, think you are walking for Him.¹² If you do not believe in God, but believe in any being as the Supreme Being, do everything for him. The results will be the same. When the results come, offer those results to the Supreme Being. After fulfilling your daily duties, when you retire every evening or night, offer the fruits of actions you have done during the day time, mental and physical, to the Supreme Being, they will not bind you any more. And when you wake up in the morning, have this thought that whatever you do during the day is not for yourself, but for the Supreme Being. In that way, if you do the works and live in the world for the world, you will find that these ordinary actions of your life will purify your heart, will cut out the tree of selfishness, and make you free in the end.

¹² There runs a song, composed by the mystic saint Ramaprasad, which expresses the similar ideas:

‘शयने प्रणाम ज्ञान, निद्राय कर माके ध्यान, आहार कर मने कर, आहुति दिइ
श्यामा माके ॥ * * ओनन्दे रामप्रसाद रटे, मा विराजेन सर्व घटे, नगर फेर मने
कर, प्रदक्षिण श्यामा माके ॥ मन, बलि भज काली इच्छा हय या आचारे * * ।

That is, ‘When you will go to sleep, think that you are going to prostrate before Shyāmā Mā (Divine Mother, Kālī), and when you will go to eat anything, think that you are offering an oblation to Her. * * Sri Rāmaprasād says with joy and delight that Mā or Divine Mother exists everywhere and in everything, and so when you will walk around any city or village, you will think that you are encircling the Divine Mother. O mind, you worship the Divine Mother, Kālī, in whatever way you like. . . .’

CHAPTER XVI

DIVINE BEING IS DWELLING EVERYWHERE

The sage, whose attachment was gone, who was liberated, whose mind was established in knowledge of the wisdom and unity of existence, and whose works were like sacrifices, cut asunder all the knots of nescience or *maya*. Sri Krishna says: "He, whose action is dissolved, who is free from the law of action and reaction, whose attachment to the results or effect of works is gone, whose mind is liberated from the imperfections and bondages of ignorance and self-delusion, pride, vanity and other desires of worldly nature, whose mind is brightened with knowledge and whose attention is fixed upon the unity of existence, the reality of the subjective universe and the objective universe, is a sage (or Sannyasi)"—"तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः" (4.19)

The Supreme Being is dwelling everywhere, and if a man can feel the divinity in everything around him i.e. in his own body and outside and does as a free offering and sacrifice without seeking anything, he transcends the delusive world. Whenever you offer anything to a being without seeking any result, or if you sacrifice anything in the name of any one, do not think of the result, and perform works with that feeling of sacrifice. You are, in reality, free from the law of action and reaction, or cause and sequence, and, consequently, you are free from the cycle of birth and rebirth. You will no longer be born on this plane, because you are free from desires. As long as you have desires of an earthly nature, you are bound to come here on earth and have these desires fulfilled. No one can change this inevitable law. You may believe in the law of gravitation or not, still the force is working and the law is there. When you will realize that law, you will understand that this body, although it is kept apparently by your individual efforts, amount to nothing, if the universal force of attraction ceases to manifest itself.

We should remember that everything is based upon that

one Reality ; everything is like the manifestation of the one Supreme Being. We must feel it and must realize it. When we look at any object of this world, we must have to feel the Reality in the midst of the changeable names and forms and shapes. That changeable something is not different from the unchangeable reality of the Soul. This recognition (*pratyabhijana*) comes to one who has attained to that highest wisdom. Ordinarily when we perform any work, we have the sense that we are the doers or performers. There are instruments of work, like hands, body, and other things, and there is the enjoyer in all, and in all these things we must learn to see the unchangeable Supreme Being as the foundation of these things.

Instead of having these different ideas, we must have one idea or thought, and that should be only of the reality of the universe which is known as the *Atman*, or the Brahman, which means the vast or cosmic existence, the unchangeable Infinite Being who pervades the atoms and molecules of the universe. Really that Reality pervades everything and shines everywhere. One should think of one's own self as the witness (*sakshi*). The mind is working, senses are working, and the body is working, but the real spirit in us is free from all kinds of work. That realization should never be lost, although in whatever business we may be engaged and in whatever way we may be busy in our daily life.

If you give anything to anybody, you should not have the idea that you are giving it and somebody is receiving it. You should have the feeling that the giver is the *Atman*, and the act of giving and the receiver are also the same. Do not have any expectation or hope of receiving anything in return. You have given something and there it ends. Those who have strong desires for getting something in return, will think of receiving it and the shape in which it will be returned, and the result of this will bring the same bondage to each one. These people who have such thoughts, are bound by the law of cause and sequence, or action and reaction. They cannot attain to that highest realization of oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Spirit. This idea is entertained by the Yatis or Sannyasins in India. When they eat or drink something, they say: "The food is the manifestation of the divine power, the fire within that digests it, is the manifestation of the Divinity, and

the act of eating is also the expression of the divine will, and the eater is also the Divine, or the Supreme Being".¹

If you have that thought that everything is divine, you do not see any evil in the world, do not see things like good and bad, and do not see virtue and vice, but you will feel the Divinity everywhere. Some people think this world is full of wickedness, so how can we see goodness? As long as we have not realized the absolute Truth, we see the same opposite or contradiction everywhere in everything. Sin and virtue exist as long as we think of ourselves as the limited human beings. From the percept or angle of vision of the Divinity there is neither virtue, nor vice, but everything is divine. That is the greatest realization or revelation that human beings can aspire after or achieve. So, in all actions a great sage, who is free from attachment and has transcended all laws and relativities, sees Divinity in every action and like a true Yogi he performs works as sacrifices, without thinking of the result. But those who have desires to go to heaven, perform actions having special desires as well as having the sense of 'I', 'me', 'mine', 'I am the doer, this result must come to me, these things belong to me, and must come to me, I am going to heaven', etc., and will reap the desired results and be bound by the law of cause and sequence. They can enjoy these results for a certain length of time only. There are bright spirits like *Devas* and *Yakshas*, and they worship them and find quicker results in this sort of worship, just as the Roman Catholics do. If you worship a spirit and become devoted to that spirit, and if it has the power to give you that thing because of your worshipping, that will be quicker. But if you want the highest and greatest happiness and freedom from all imperfections, no one can give that to you except the Highest. You may also worship a personal God with some name and form, but that is only a partial expression of the unlimited Divine Being. So those who worship a limited personal God, or man-made God, do get results, because all the results of actions are nothing but

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविर्ब्रह्मामौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥४।२४

“यदर्पणबुद्ध्या गृह्यते लोके तदस्य ब्रह्मविदो ब्रह्मैवेत्यर्थः ।” —Sankara

reactions of our desires and thoughts, but by that they do not get the highest freedom and do not realize the unchangeable truth, the *Atman*.

A personal God, according to Vedanta, is changeable. A personal God without name and form, without having some limitations, cannot be conceived by human minds, and as long as a personal God is the object of conception by human minds, he is not the Highest. So a personal God, as the Christians understand Him, means One who is very limited. He is outside of the universe and does this thing and that. He has desires, repentance, qualifications, and attributes like those of a human being.

The ideal of Vedanta is quite different. The ideal of Vedanta is to go beyond that personal God. He is the Infinite Being who is above all limitations. How can we give any qualities to that Being who is above all attributes, mind, thoughts, and intellect. Those who worship the minor deities, get results more quickly, but their actions, of course, are considered as sacrifices which are of different kinds. Those who worship a personal God, give some offering of prayers or some external object like work, or any good thing like clothes or food. Those should be considered as a sacrifice, but the highest form of sacrifice is the application of wisdom feeling Divinity everywhere as well as the ideal of oneness, or unity of existence.

Here you will find that there are different kinds of sacrifices described in the five verses.² All devotional exercises should be

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- दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।
 ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ॥
 श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति ।
 शब्दादीन् विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति ॥
 सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।
 आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥
 द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथाऽपरे ।
 स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥
 अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथाऽपरे ।
 प्राणापानगती रुद्धा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥

considered as sacrifices of some kind. Some people try to pour oblations of the senses and sense-powers into the fire of restraint. These are metaphorical ways of expressing that the senses should be controlled, and the sense-control is the fire to and upon which the powers of senses should be offered and burned. Others sacrifice the objects of the senses in the fire of sense-powers.

This description relates to Raja Yoga. The first thing you should notice is what kind of control and restraint is meant here. There should be control of the mind and sense-powers, passions, desires, etc. How does that control come? It comes through harmony (शम वा समता) self-restraint (दम) constant remembrance (स्मृति वा स्मरण) concentration (धारणा) meditation (ध्यान) and superconscious realization (समाधि) In trying to concentrate upon the heart, when you try to get that state of superconsciousness, you will have to concentrate your mind upon the form of the heart (*hridaya-padma*). Concentration means fixing the attention upon some part of the body, or upon some object for a certain length of time, and the effort to do that (*yatna*) is referred to by the word concentration.³ First think of the form of the heart, and from that if you have an

Besides there are other *yajnas* like:

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।
 सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदा यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥
 यज्ञशिष्टाभृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।
 नार्यं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥
 एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्राह्मणो मुखे ।
 कर्मजान् विद्धि तान सर्वानिवं ज्ञाता विमोक्ष्यसे ॥४।२५-३२

Regarding the word प्राणकर्माणि in the *sloka* 4.27, Sridhara Swami mentioned different kinds of *prana-karma*, with their names, and they are:

उद्गारे नाग आख्यातः कूर्म उन्मीलने स्मृतः ।
 वृकः क्षुत्करो ज्ञेयो देवदत्तो विजृम्भणे ।
 न जहाति मृतश्चापि सर्वव्यापी धनञ्जयः ॥

³ Patanjali says: 'तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम्'

—Vide *Yogadarshanam* III. 2.

idea of a personal God, think of that personal God in your heart, and let the thought constantly run in the direction of the personal God which is the ideal, removing other thoughts from the mind for the time being. When that is done and other thoughts do not disturb the mind, then you have meditation. And if that meditation be kept undisturbed for a certain length of time, or when the meditation does not waver or leave the object of meditation but remains steady and firm, then comes the superconscious realization (*samyag-darshana*). Then it is called *samadhi*. These three states are the states meant by that one word *samadhi*. When your other thoughts, desires, passions, and sense-perceptions are in abeyance and the mind is concentrated, being fixed upon your ideal, that state is called *samadhi* of the lowest kind. That is the first state, when your thought current is running towards the ideal without a break.

When you pour oil from one vessel into another, there is a continuous current (*taila-dharavat*), and when your thought-current is all converged towards one idea and runs without a break, that state is called meditation, and when that state is firm and lasts for a certain length of time, it becomes *samadhi*. This is the first step or stage of *samadhi*. Afterwards the object of *samadhi* and the thinker are one; they coalesce and become one. You do not think of yourself as the thinker and the thought-current which is created by the thinker as the object (*dhyeya*), but when meditation becomes very strong and intense, and firm and steady, it brings the subject and object (*dhyāta* and *dhyeya*.—*jñātā* and *jneya*) together and fixes them on one being or thing, and that is the state when you transcend all thoughts and ordinary consciousness without losing the lower conscious state. In that state, you become conscious of yourself as independent of the body, brain, and everything else. Then you feel that the Supreme Being is independent of everything and is the source of everything. The world of phenomena vanishes⁴ and all dreams also vanish. When you wake up, this world will appear to you as a dream with its multiform shapes, colours, and powers and not as realities.

⁴ That means the separate existence of the material world is replaced by the all-shining existence of the *Atman*.

The question was put to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa: "Why, during the state of *samadhi* do I not see these phenomena?", and he answered that there are mountains and valleys in the bed of the ocean and we do not see them, because they are covered with a vast sheet of water. They exist, but we are not conscious of them, and our consciousness is of the water. So all these phenomenal objects of the ocean become covered with the one vast expanse of the all-intelligent Supreme Spirit (*chaitanyamaya* Brahman) like the water and you do not realize any difference. You do not see or feel anything other than consciousness. Then all sense-objects vanish, because sense-objects exist only as long as sense-powers are active. At the time of deep sleep (*sushupti*), you do not realize the sense-objects. If there be a noise when you are in a sound sleep, you do not hear it. So these things vanish and, inspite of our losing consciousness and identity, our inner consciousness (the *Atman*) remains on a higher plane. Then we are conscious but beyond the sense powers and beyond the powers of intellect. This state of *samadhi* is very difficult to acquire. Ordinary people of the world cannot acquire it, because it requires a long practice (*abhyāsa*), and you will have to keep yourself free from worldly cares to a great extent. There are other reasons also as to why this state is not easily acquired. There are five states of our mind. The first state is where the mind is scattered and disturbed by passion, anger, hatred, jealousy; that state is a disintegrated or scattered state of mind (*kshipta*). The second state is where the mind is inert, dull, and stupid (*mudha*). It cannot be roused to any activity, and there is a great deal of *tamas* i.e. a constant state of indifference, where there is no appreciation of anything. Then no qualities come out. It is a state of dullness and inertness. In that state there cannot be concentration, meditation or superconscious realization.

The third state, the agitated state (*vikshipta*) means that state which is characterised ordinarily by anger, hatred, passion, or desire, but at certain times it can be fixed, controlled, and brought under subjection, and can be fixed on the higher plane for a certain length of time. That state is better. But, in that state, the mind is not ready to reach the highest realization, because the mind, when concentrated or fixed on a higher and

not on the highest object, it is easily disturbed by any object. Any noise, or any thought or idea or pain in the body, would break that concentration and meditation.

The fourth state is concentration which means one-pointedness (*ekāgra*) when the mind is fixed upon the ideal. Even when doing the works of the body, your mind does not forget the ideal. In that state, three-fourths of your mind are concentrated upon the ideal, and with one fourth you are doing the duties of body and mind. Then your body works mechanically. If your mind is busy with different things, still you will feel that a part of your mind is toward the ideal and with the other half you are doing the work automatically. That state is much better, and it is ready to attain to the higher meditation and superconsciousness.

The fifth is the state of absolute confinement within the Higher Self, when the whole of your mind is fixed upon ideal, all works depart, and all other thoughts do not appeal to you. This state is called *niruddha*. In that *niruddha* condition of yours, the world would think of you as useless, and you also would think of the world as useless to you, because you have risen above the sense plane and above the plane of duties. Ordinary people think that as long as we are doing the duties of life, we are doing the highest work, but that is only on the plane of duties. But when you feel that the highest duty and ideal are realization of the true Self, or realization of the unity of the individual soul with the Supreme Being and when you try to perform that duty first, all other duties vanish, just as the duties of one in business will vanish, when he comes to his house and begins to do his household duties. So when you are on the human plane, you have human duties, but when you are on the soul plane, the highest duty of the soul is to know its true nature, who it is, what it is, and what relation it bears to the universe. At this time all other duties drop off. Ordinary people on the human plane will think that a person of this type is going crazy, but really he is going beyond their reach or beyond conception. That which pleases these people on the sense plane is not attractive to the person who has risen above it. This fifth (*niruddha*) state is the state where the mind is free from all disturbances like passion, anger, hatred, jealousy, etc. and then other ideas, thoughts and desires do not disturb your

mind at all. When the mind is fixed on the object of meditation and stays there undisturbed, that state of *samādhi* is called the fire of restraint, and a Yogi sacrifices the sense and sense-powers in that fire of restraint. This is done by restraining the sense and by withdrawing the mind from the objects of senses and attaching it to, and fixing it upon, the highest ideal of our life. In that state, he remains for some time, and when he comes down on the human plane or the plane of senses, where mind, intellect, and sense perceptions work he would sacrifice the objects of senses in the fire of senses: “इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति” (४।२६)

Others sacrifice all the functions of the sense-organs and the vital actions in the fire of Yoga, or self-restraint, kindled by wisdom.⁵ All the sense-powers, functions of the sense organs are of two kinds, one is what we call the sense of knowledge⁶ and the other is the sense of action.⁷ The sense of knowledge is the eyes, ears, nose, etc., and the sense of action are the hands, feet, etc., and the actions of *prana*, like digestion, circulation of blood, nerve currents etc. are sacrificed in the fire of wisdom kindled by self-restraint.

First of all, you will have to realize yourself as the ruler of body, mind, and sense powers. All the sense powers and functions of body and mind obey the command of the ruler of the true self, the *Atman*, and the knowledge of that *Atman* or true Self is the fire, and to that fire everything should be offered as an oblation (*Gita*, IV 29). The moment you think of your true Self, all your mental and sense activities will stop, and your breath and pulsation will stop, the heart-beat will stop, and body will be like a dead body for the time being. At this stage you rise above the human plane, and feel separate from the body.

If you can kindle that fire of wisdom in your soul, in that fire when it is bruning, the sense-powers and functions are all sacrificed for the time being. But when you come down on the human plane, they come up again. The functions of the senses vanish and are completely dissolved only when the Yogi con-

⁵ The *Gita* IV. 27.

⁶ ज्ञानेन्द्रिय ;

⁷ कर्मेन्द्रिय ;

centrates himself upon the Self. In that state, you will have absolute peace, rest, happiness, and bliss.

There are other sacrifices, and six kinds of them are described. Besides, there are also twelve kinds of sacrifice. There are sacrificers of wealth, those who give to poorer people for some purpose or with some idea of helping the poor or getting something in return after death. They sacrifice material objects and get the results. There are some who sacrifice their wealth and property and give them to the poor in India. They go to some holy places and distribute clothes on some particular occasion. They give away money, elephants, and horses. One of them may give a good and expensive horse to some holy one. Some of them would meet thousands of poorer classes and give everything to them that they need. They do it as their sacrifice, but most of them have some object in view. But there are some who do not think of getting anything in return. They give away everything as a free offering. They possess these things, but do not want them any more ; they give them away so that other people may make the best use of them.

There are sacrifices who practise austerity, and they go through all hardships and sacrifice comforts. There are some who will not wear shoes and expensive clothes. They will not sleep in a bed, but do it under trees and cover these bodies with coarse clothes. Instead of having delicious dishes they would eat coarse food ; that is a kind of sacrifice. Instead of carrying an umbrella, they will get wet in the rain, and the sun will shine on their heads. This does not do any harm on, but strengthens both body and mind. The artificial life which we are living, is the most degrading and degenerating to our souls. We have become weak and helpless, and live as miserable creatures under the direction of doctors and relatives, who are constantly taking care of poor little things. But those who practise hardships, have the power over changes of weather etc. and remain unaffected by them.

There are others who are called the sacrificers of Yoga, who practise *pranayama* or breathing exercise, and the eight steps of Yoga. There is another kind of sacrifice made by some, that of reading the scriptures. They sacrifice their taste for other things and read the scriptures or other books which will help the spiritual unfoldment of the soul, instead of reading novels.

They sacrifice their lower tastes, which ordinary people generally have. Others take some vows and practice them, knowing that they are extremely helpful.

In the *Yogasutra* of Patanjali, there are eight kinds of Yoga-practice, and they are:

यम-नियम-आसन-प्राणायाम-प्रत्याहार-धारणा-ध्यानसमाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि (२।२९)।

Then what is *Yama*? Patanjali has said:

“अहिंसा-सत्य-अस्तेय-ब्रह्मचर्य-अपरिग्रहा” (२।३०)

i.e. non-killing or non injuring any living creatures, truthfulness, not to speak evil or to deceive any one, not stealing or continence Patanjali defines *niyama* as,

शौचसन्तोष तपःस्वाध्यायश्चरप्रणिधानाणि नियमाः (२।३२)।

These have been explained by Patanjali in the *Yogasutra* with examples from II. 35 to II. 45 *sutra*. As for example,

- (a) सन्तोषादनुत्तमसुखलाभः ; (b) कायेन्द्रियसिद्धिरनुद्विष्यात्तपसः ;
(c) साध्यादिष्टदेवतासम्प्रयोगः ; (d) समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात्, etc.

Now, let us explain *niyama*. The word *saucha* means purification of body and mind. *Santosha* means contentment. Whatever you have, be contented with that and do not encourage any false ambition. You must not think of having this or that in order to be a Yogi, you will be able to bear the pangs of hunger, thirst, and changes of weather, and this is called *tapah*. You must not be so delicate in health that if you feel hungry for five minutes, you are going to die. If you are strict and cannot get a glass of water right now you feel very uneasy. That is weakness and it should be controlled. If you feel a little cold, learn to bear it and bring out the strength which your system possesses.

Sādhyāya is the reading of those books which describe the nature of the soul and enlighten our minds, or taking the help of some formula, like *Pranava* or the *mahāvākya*, *So'ham*. These would be equal to reading the scriptures. When you are not doing anything, sit quietly, repeat the name or formula, and think of its meaning, and that will be the best way of spending your time instead of reading trashy things.

Isvara-pranidhāna is thinking of the Supreme Being, the source of our life and happiness, the Life of our life and the Soul of our souls. It is known as meditation on God. These

things are practised by some all the time. Some cannot do these things all the time, but take some vows. If you are in the habit of injuring others and killing animals, take a vow (*brata*) that for three months you will not injure any living creature. Practise this for any length of time, a month, or a week, that you will not injure anybody, physically or mentally, and keep to it. Practise for a week that you will not tell a lie, no matter what happens. Some of you may lose your work and business because of this. There are many such instances. A man might have made some plans that he would not tell a lie for a month and after a week he would have to leave his position and he could not get along. Instances may be multiplied, but that should not deter the aspirant from the avowed path.

Our present life is mostly false, and there is only a medium of truth in it. This sort of artificial life is built upon quicksands, and if you try to trace the foundation of your civilisation, you will find that it is, by and large, built upon falsehood. Think of the miserable condition of our society. If you do not deceive any one, you cannot get anywhere. You will have to show outwardly how pleased you are to meet some one. But inwardly you think that if that person hears or speaks to you, you will be so unhappy. You are behaving like this and teaching and encouraging your children to do the same. You are not ashamed of imagining that you are living the right kind of life. The sooner you get out of this condition, the better it is. It would be better to go into the forest and live alone than to live in a society of this kind of people, or to live in any society where there are all kinds of things not helpful to the soul. There are some who take vows for not injuring a person, or telling a lie, or eating meat. If you are in the habit of eating meat, take a vow that you will not eat meat for a month, and live on vegetables. Do not eat any animal food for a month, and you will not die. Many Indians who live on fish or animal food, for three months or four of every year, spend four months also in eating nothing but vegetables and cereals and fruit and milk and butter. Some of them are very strict about this sort of sacrifice. You should curb those extremes, break that rigid habit, transcend that condition, and develop a variety and, at the same time, bring out other qualities which you are suppressing and killing by living a life of artificial routine.

Through those vows and practices, one should be able to conquer passion, anger, greed, and self-delusion. These four are the gates of hell, which means ignorance, suffering, misery, sorrow, and non-realization of truth. These are known as hell. By non-killing, non-injuring and forgiveness we conquer anger. By living the right kind of life, we conquer passion and desire for taking something which does not belong to us. These can be conquered by practising non-stealing and contentment. If you be contented with what you have already and if you do not have desire to take anything unlawfully which does not belong to you, you conquer one of the most wicked tendencies of the human mind. How many people are arrested, even of good families, for stealing. If you wish to conquer that tendency, take vows for a year that you will not think of taking anything which does not belong to you. Go out in the street and have determination. All these things are extremely necessary, because we are not living the right kind of life. A Yogi is one who lives exactly according to the moral and spiritual laws.

Truthfulness demands that when speaking of things which we know, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant, we must tell them frankly and boldly. Truth is not always palatable. There is a saying, "you must tell the truth, but tell that which is pleasant, and if a truth is unpleasant, it should not be told unless the speaker is pressed by circumstances". But still a Yogi who is not living in society and does not care for society, but cares more for truth, will always speak the truth when he is asked, and by that he will conquer self-delusion. Every time we tell a lie and we delude ourselves and injure ourselves. Instead of approaching and coming nearer to the realization of Truth, we put an obstacle in our way and that is the reason why a person should not tell a lie if he wishes to conquer his attachment to the lower self. Why do we go to the extreme of telling lies? Because of our attachment to the lower self and egoism.

We are so much attached to our lower ego that we try to protect it by means. Some people tell the untruth for fear of losing either name or fame or position or any property which belongs to those persons, and when these are conquered, we have conquered the roots of all evil. Practice of this will help the soul in approaching the Truth more quickly.

The next verse describes the breathing exercises. These different practices and sacrifices which we have just described, show that all these are helpful in attaining the highest realization of that unity. These are, of course, lower ones, and have instant results, but these may lead to the higher realization. Those who are anxious for the higher realization to be in constant tune with the Divinity, should practise the best of all these sacrifices in the first state, the sacrifice of wisdom (*jnana-yajna*). They are to see unity in existence everywhere, and in whatever they do. They are to do it without seeking the results, always thinking that the doer is Brahman, the act is Brahman, and the object also Brahman (vide *Gita*, IV. 24).

When you eat or drink or walk or talk or do any work, think of yourself as one with the Supreme Being, and all these works are nothing but manifestations of the divine powers. You are like a machine and the divine powers are working through you. Do not think that you are doing all these things. The root of all evil is this sense of "I" (*aham* or *ahamkara*), the idea that the doer is I myself

That which makes us forget our little selves, is divine. The lower soul longs to forget itself to be merged in the super-soul. That is the secret, and anything that does not help the soul in forgetting itself, is not attractive to the soul. The soul loves to worship the super-soul which is God. Through love the soul can forget its own being as an individual soul quicker than through anything else. Devotion and other exercises help one in forgetting oneself as an individual ego. So forget your own personality and think of yourself as the soul, and not as Mr. or Mrs. So and so, then you will feel Divinity everywhere: 'ईशावास्यसिदं सर्वम् यत्किञ्च' etc. The divine Being is working through all these diverse instruments, and the goal that is to be reached, is nothing else than the Divinity Himself. Through those afore-said kinds of work we shall be able to attain to the goal of all religions.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BRAHMARPANA-KARMAYOGA

All different methods described in Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga as well as in Hatha Yoga are considered as sacrifices. Here the breathing exercises are also considered as sacrifices.

Some people offer the vital air or *prana* as oblation to the fire of *apana*.¹ *Prana* means outgoing breath, and *apana* means ingoing breath. The Yogi is to retrain the passages of *prana* and *apana*. Those who have not studied the methods and have not practiced breathing exercises, will not easily understand the meaning of these passages.

When you take the breath in, that is exercising *apana*, and when you breathe out, that is exercising *prana*. There are different kinds of *pranayama* i.e. restraint of the breath. First is the kind in which you take the breath in and hold it. That is one kind. When you take the breath out, you do not empty the lungs entirely. Even when you breathe out, there is a portion of the breath left in the lungs, and that is called *apana*, because it has gone in; and when you breathe in again and hold the breath, that is one kind of *pranayama*. The tendency of the lungs is to breathe in and out like the action of a pump.

Another kind of sacrifice, a kind of *pranayama*, is that the breath should be offered as oblation to the fire of *prana*.² After breathing out, you hold the breath for a time, breathe in for a certain length of time, as prescribed in the science of Yoga. The third kind is taking the breath in, holding for a certain time, breathing out, and holding the breath out. The fourth kind is suddenly stopping the breath, neither breathing in or out, but just stopping the breath. These four kinds of *pranayama* are described here.

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथाऽपरे ॥४१२९

प्राणपानगती रुद्धा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥४१२९

(क) अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं,

(ख) प्राणेऽपानं तथाऽपरे,

When the breath has to come in, greater quantity of external air should be drawn in, and when you have breathed out, breathe out a little more and empty your lungs as much as you can, and hold it there. That is another kind of *pranayama*. This should not be practised by ordinary persons, not under the special instruction of a well-practised teacher. Those who do not follow the Yoga practices, strictly according to the formulated rules, invite dangers in these practices.

There are others again who have practised the fourth kind of *pranayama*, neither breathing in, nor out, and offering all the sense powers to the fire of *prana*. The fire of that *pranayama* can be felt in the sudden restraint of breath. When you have restrained your breath in that fire, all the sense activities will stop suddenly and they can be brought under control. You can stop the sense activities through your will. You can have your eyes wide open, but will not see anything. There may be impressions on the retina, but you will not see anything, if the impression is not carried to the conscious plane. When your breath has stopped, or you are not breathing, your mind will be in perfect concentration. When the breath stops, you will be in an undisturbed state of mind.

Many of you have noticed at the time of concentration and meditation that when your mind is deeply absorbed, your breath becomes slower and slower and you can hardly feel that you are breathing at all. Later on, after continuing this practice for some time, you will find that external breath is not necessary. You do not live by external breath then. That process is not absolutely necessary. A Yogi can live without going through that process of breathing for days and months. You have heard of stories of Yogis buried alive in hermetically sealed boxes and kept for forty days without a chance of getting a breath of air, and afterwards when they were brought out and the boxes opened, they revived. How did they do that? They did it just in the same way as the lower animals, snakes etc., sleep during the winter. The Yogis learned this method from the lower animals. They turned the tongue upwards and

(ग) प्राणापानगती रुद्धा,

(घ) प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।४।२९-३०

These are four kinds of *pranayama*.

closed the passage at the roof of the mouth, just as the lower animals do when they hibernate. And, in Hatha Yoga, there is a practice that you should elongate your tongue so that you should be able to turn it upwards and close the hole at the roof of the mouth.⁴ All these are artificial methods. By these methods we simply learn the different kinds of breathing exercises.

Ordinary people breathe from the chest. They do not take deep breath. The breathing from below the diaphragm is seldom to be found in ordinary persons. A Yogi practises this and gets certain results from it.

There are different methods of moderating the breath. The breath can come out to a certain distance and then can be increased by holding cotton, wool or a feather.⁵ And when you take the breath and it goes in, you will feel a kind of creepy sensation in your system, and as far as the breath goes down you will feel it, and then when you suddenly stop it, the air which has entered in, becomes fire. The oxygen works in all the cells of the body, and if you wish to remove any pain, or cure or heal any part of the body, you can do that; or if you wish to throw off any impurities from any part of the system or organ, you can do it, but it requires a long time and constant practice to have it done. This breathing is also practised by moderating the time as to how one can breathe in and what length of time one can spend in taking the breath in and breathing out, etc. All these different practices are given in the science of Yoga.

In this way, they regulate the food. Regulation of food is necessary in order to accomplish good results. I have described different kinds of food in my book, *How to be a Yogi* in the chapter on Hatha Yoga.

By regulating the food they offer the sense powers as oblation to the vital air. They also stop the sense powers by the restraint of breath. The Yogis say that you can gain anything you want by the power of restraint of the vital air. You can control your mind. You can develop your mind, intellect, and memory by controlling the vital air (*prana*) and by

⁴ This process is known as the *trātoka-yoga*, prescribed in the *Hatayoga-sādhana*.

⁵ This kind of yoga-practice is found in *pavana-svarodaya-sādhana*.

bringing out the latent energy that is stored up in the nerve centres in the spine. All these mental powers are the doers of sacrifices whose sins are destroyed by these different kinds of sacrifice. These are called sacrifices, because they destroy sins and impurities of the systems.

Sins mean imperfections, and when the system is imperfect and there are impurities in the nerves and organs, they should be called physical sin. That we may get from our parents, or wrong living, or from eating or drinking things which are not right, or if we do not obey the moral laws. The Yogis exercise cleanliness. They try to make the organs act properly. They try to purify their minds and develop their sense powers, and at the same time, exercise the power of control. They develop their will-power also.

In trying to develop the sense powers, you will have to develop will-power, because that controls all other powers. The mind should be purified from imperfections like passion, anger, hatred, pride, jealousy, ambition and egoism, etc. These are not virtues. Ordinary people think that a person who has no ambition, ought not to live, because ambition is a sign of prosperity, and "if you do not have anxiety, what is the use of living?" I have heard many American people say like this.

Some hold the view that worry is like steam. As an engine cannot work without steam, so a man cannot live without worry. Such a foolish idea these people have. But those who practise Yoga and try to follow the right path in order to gain peace and true happiness and to become free from anxiety, worry, sorrow, suffering for gaining perfect control and mastery over their selves, should consider these as sins, and should not encourage these things. The Yogis who practise these different kinds of sacrifice, take their meals during fixed hours between the practices, and do not eat all kinds of food, but follow strictly the directions given in the science of Yoga. They eat ambrosial or pure food, as described in the science of Yoga, in the prescribed manner. They do not take too much food or drink. They practise moderation, and all these different kinds of food are taken in right quantities. They also know how many times food should be taken. Thus they become free from disease and imperfections of the body. In fact, those who live in this way, attain to the highest goal of life on this

earth. They are happy here, and after the death of the body, they go to the higher places or higher realms of existence, where they enjoy permanent peace and happiness. There are some who attain to the highest goal and never come back to this plane at all. They transcend all laws of nature and become absolutely free, and at last realize the unchangeable truth which is eternal.

Those who do not practise any of these sacrifices that are described, are never happy in this world, nor in the next. True happiness in this world is not for the non-sacrificer, so how can he be happy in the other world? Those who have not observed these laws and have not attained to self-control, are not happy in this life. They may delude themselves by thinking they are happy, but they are constantly disturbed by worry and anxiety in this life. After death they are disturbed in the same manner, because what we are to be in future must be determined here, according to the kind of life we live. Our future should be the resultant of our present. We ourselves mould our future and create our destiny and make ourselves as we wish to be.

Thus these manifold sacrifices are shown in the Vedas, and all lead to the highest goal of the realization of Truth. But these sacrifices are in the realms of activity of mind and body. All these various sacrifices that have been described and prescribed, are nothing but modes of action. If they are mental, they are mental activities, which are kinds of action. If they be physical, there are also action. And as every action produces reaction, these sacrifices produce their results in the form of reaction. But those who realize that these actions are only of mind and body and not of the true nature of the soul, the *Atman*, which is beyond all these activities, reach the highest goal very quickly.

Sri Krishna extols and describes first the highest form of sacrifice, the *jnana*, the wisdom sacrifice. It is by knowing that the true nature of the soul, the *Atman*, is actionless. That knowledge is the highest. But that is very difficult to obtain. Very few people can attain to that knowledge. As long as we are in the realm of mind and intellect and as long as we are in the realm of activity, we cannot attain to that knowledge. But there are a few who do attain to that knowledge in this

life, and Sri Krishna describes plainly that this sacrifice of wisdom is greater and higher than other sacrifices.

The sacrifice of wisdom (*gnana-yajna*) is higher than the sacrifice of external objects (*dravya-yajna*).⁶ External objects include sense powers, breath, and every other object, because they are outside of our spiritual nature. All of these things on the plane of phenomena are called external; and that which is beyond all phenomena and unchangeable, is called the innermost Self. All actions are consummated in the highest wisdom.⁷ Wisdom means the realization or knowledge of our true Self as divine, immortal, above and beyond nature and mind. It is one with the Supreme Spirit. It is the source of intelligence, existence, and bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*).

Some people may object to it and say: "Why should our ordinary knowledge be subject to mental activity?" Our ordinary intelligence, which is relative, is a kind of activity and it should be counted as an action. The commentator, raising this objection, answers that ordinary knowledge, or consciousness of intelligence, is only the reflection of the higher absolute knowledge, which is our true nature. It is a reflection on the mental plane, or on the intellect or mind. True knowledge is not in thinking activities. It is not in that substance which, when it becomes active, produces thought, but it is beyond that intelligence or knowledge which proceeds from our true Self, or the *Atman*. Therefore, the source of knowledge is beyond all activities, and it is actionless. Here this knowledge, which is the consummation of actions, can be obtained by only that knowledge i.e. by realization of the oneness, or of the unity of existence of our true Being.

Know this that knowledge can be obtained from those who are wise and have realized the Truth. They can impart that knowledge to you. You can obtain that knowledge by reverencing them, questioning and obeying them, and by serving them. For that knowledge go to those who are wise and realized men, and who are greater than philosophers. One

* श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयाद् यज्ञाज् ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप ।४।३३

* सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥४।३३

who has realized the Truth in himself is called a seer of Truth. He is greater than a philosopher.*

There is a word, Jnani, which means a man of wisdom. A man of wisdom is he who has seen and beheld the Truth. If knowledge is not imparted by one who has seen the Truth, that knowledge is not active. It will not be effective, will not produce the highest result, and will not bring realization. You can go to a philosopher who can tell you intellectually that there is such a thing as your true being and give you logical points, and give you some arguments and direct you in a certain way and show you how to think in a certain way and to reason in that way, but that kind of teacher is not described here in the *Gita*. The *Gita* says about the teacher who has realized the absolute truth and can impart it to his disciple. The knowledge of the *Atman* can only be obtained by going to such a realized teacher in an humble way and asking him questions: "Who am I, what am I, why am I bound by this chain, and how shall I be free, by what method shall I be free?", and also other questions which arise in the mind of the disciple. The master is not bound to give it, but he will give it only because of his kindness and sympathy. You may live with the master for years and years, but if you do not deserve his sympathy and if you do not obey and follow his wishes, you will never obtain that absolute knowledge. In India, you will find, if you read any of the books concerned, that the sages keep their disciples with them for years and train them. This knowledge will come to only one who is ready, and one who is not ready will not get it. There should

* Swami Abhedananda has divided philosophers into three classes: (1) one, who has directly realized the *Atman*, or who has obtained immediate awareness of the Absolute; (2) one, who has not directly realized the *Atman*, but reads books on philosophy so as to know the process of approaching to realization of the *Atman* and practically lives the life of a philosopher; (3) one, who only reads books on philosophy for his acquisition of facts and intellectual knowledge about the highest Truth, and aspires to earn name and reputation as a philosopher or scholar. But, according to the Swami, the man, who has realized the *Atman* and has cut asunder the knots ofnescience (*ajñāna*), is the true philosopher.

तद्विद्धि प्रणयातेन परिप्रक्षेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्तदंशिनः ॥४॥३४

be devotion to and faith in the master, and then the master will instruct the disciple in the desired manner.

From this you can understand the method which is observed in India. And this method has kept true spirituality alive in this age of agnosticism and atheism. Every Hindu boy must find an ideal teacher who is able to impart that highest knowledge. That is the first thing that a Hindu boy or girl looks for as soon as he or she arrives at a certain age. This is the first thing, and they care for much to attain the knowledge of the absolute and unchangeable Reality.

All these questions can also be answered in a materialistic way, but these (materialistic) answers will never help you in understanding your true self, or the Self of the universe. So we do not accept these materialistic conclusions which are admired so much and accepted in the Western countries. We have plenty of these. India was the first country which produced materialistic thinkers and agnostics, hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, and all these arguments were then given. But they were rejected, because they were on-sided and did not explain the things from the standpoint of the universe. This passage has been translated by Sankaracharya in the *Bhagavad Gita* as follows: "Go to the teacher and humbly prostrate yourself, show your humility, and show that you have come to learn and not to touch. Ask him the cause of bondage and the right means of deliverance, what is wisdom and what is nescience; what deludes and forces you to mistake the real for the unreal, matter for spirit and spirit for matter?" Won over by these and other marks of respect, the teacher, knowing well the truth, will impart to you that wisdom which has been described above "Some, but not all, can know and realize the truth"* By this, the Lord means to say that that knowledge

* Sankaracharya said in his commentary:

“तद्विद्धि विजानीहि येन विधिना प्राप्यत इति आचार्यान्भिगम्य प्रकर्षेण नीचैः पतनं प्रणिपातो दीर्घनमस्कारेण कथं बन्धः कथं मोक्षः का विद्या का चाविद्या इति परिश्रमेन सेवया गुरुश्रवणया ; * * यथोक्तविशेषणं ज्ञानवन्तोऽपि केचित् यथावत् तत्तद्दर्शनशीला, अपरे न, अतो विशिनष्टि तत्तद्दर्शनं इति ; ये सम्यग्दर्शिनैस्तरुपदिष्टं ज्ञानं कार्यक्षमं भवति, नेतरदिति भगवतो मतम् ।” (गीता ४।३४)

alone which is imparted by those who have realized the truth and no other knowledge, will prove effective.

I think you have understood the difference between a philosopher and a seer of truth and I have explained it before. A philosopher is one who has intellectually understood the difference between the real and the unreal, but a seer of truth (*Atmadrastā*) is one who has realized and felt it, who has become one with the reality of truth, rising above all unreality or untruth, and who has reached a state beyond all relativity and phenomena. So difference between a philosopher and a realized seer is great.

What will be the result of this knowledge? What will happen if you get that knowledge? "By knowing it, you will never again fall into delusion, you will never make the mistake that you are the body and that your soul is one with the body. By knowing it, you will never mistake matter for spirit and spirit for matter. By knowing it you will never mistake the phenomena of the universe and you will think that they are unchangeable, but you will see things as they are".¹⁰ Are we not deluded when we think we are going to live forever with this perishable body? Are we not foolish when we even try to think that our bodies will arise when they have been for years in the grave and reduced to dust? What a miserable condition we are placed in! That kind of mistake or delusion will never come if we feel and realize that there is such a thing as imperishable soul as separate from the perishable body. There is no question as regards the existence of God and there is no question also as regards the existence of our own selves. If we exist, God exists and if we do not exist now, God does not exist. Sri Krishna says: "You will see all things in yourselves and also in me. You will see the sun, the moon, the stars and everything in the universe not in yourself as one with the body, but in the infinite, the all-pervading Self. You will see that you cover the entire universe, and when you see it in that way. You will also see all those things in me."¹¹ It was

¹⁰ यज्ज्ञाता न पुनर्मोहमेवं यात्यसि पाण्डव ।४।३५

¹¹ येन मृतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥३।३५

because Sri Krishna was a Spirit which was divine, universal and one with the Supreme Being.

There are two methods of realization: one is to see every thing in the true Self, or the *Atman*, and the other is to see everything in God. The dualist sees everything in God, and the Jnani sees everything in his true Self, which is the same as the essence of God of the dualists. There is no difference between your true Self and the Divinity of the universe. "Even shouldst thou be the most sinful of all sinful men, by the raft of wisdom thou shalt cross over the ocean of sin".¹²

By attaining to that wisdom you find here the scientific method of getting over sin. If you do not believe in any incarnation of God, Christ, Krishna, or any one, but if you have faith and belief in yourself and if you have attained to wisdom or realization, you have crossed the ocean of sin by the raft of wisdom. Sin means imperfection or ignorance and that is the cause of all our troubles. There is sin, because we do not know who we are and what relation we bear to our true Self and to the universal Spirit, or Reality of the universe. The

Sankara said:

“येन ज्ञानेन भूतानि अशेषेण ब्रह्मादीनि स्वस्वपर्यन्तानि द्रक्ष्यसि साक्षादात्मनि प्रत्यगात्मनि मत्संस्थानीमानि भूतानि * * सर्वोपनिषत्प्रसिद्धं द्रक्ष्यसीत्यर्थः ।”

¹²

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिष्यसि ॥४।३६

(a) Anandagiri said in the glossary:

“ब्रह्मात्मैक्यज्ञानस्य सर्वपापनिवर्तकत्वेन माहात्म्यमिदानीं प्रकटयति—सर्वमिति । अधर्मे चिद्वृत्तेऽपि धर्मप्रतिबन्धात् न ज्ञानवतोऽपि मोक्षः सम्भवतीत्याशङ्क्याह—धर्मोऽपीति । इह इत्याध्यात्मशास्त्रं गृह्यते ।”

(b) Regarding the word ‘वृजिनं’, Madhusudan Sarasvati said

“वृजिनशब्देनात्र धर्माधर्मरूपं कर्म संसारफलमभिप्रेतम्, मुमुक्षोः पापवत् पुण्यस्याप्यनिश्चितात् ।”

That is, Sri Krishna says that the cycle of birth and death (*janma-marana*) constitutes *samsara* or world and this cycle is the result of merits and demerit (*dharma* and *adharma*), and so a man who wants or struggles for emancipation (*mukti*) or divine Brahman-realization, shuns both *dharma* and *adharma*, *punya* (perfection) and *papa* (imperfection or ignorance).

moment we know it, we cannot do these wrong things which we do today. If we are telling lies and doing all these things which are not right, we are trying to think of ourselves as identified with the body. Shake off that wrong and deluding idea and know your true Self. You are living in eternity not for a few days. Just hold on to that noble thought and all these things will drop off like dead leaves in the spring, and such is the power of true knowledge or wisdom.

Sri Krishna says: "As kindled fire reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of wisdom will burn all actions into ashes, will render them impotent".¹³ Our present condition of existences has been produced by us by our own actions in previous incarnation. Whatever we have got in pleasure or pain, in suffering or misery and in unhappiness or peace, are reactions of our own actions. We have really made our own conditions and are going to do the same in future by our deeds and thoughts in this existence. But we do not know that we are doing or performing that, just as we did not know it when we lived in our previous body. Unconsciously we are doing these works and when the results come, we, with a sense of surprise, say, 'who has put us in this condition?' How miserable we are!

As we have got this state, we cannot help it at present. But a Yogi tries to mould his future, so that the actions which he will do, will do consciously, and such results will not follow again. All the actions which have not yet begun to produce

13

यथैर्धासि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात् कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात् कुरुते तथा ॥४।३७

Sankara said

"तस्मात् सम्यग्दर्शनं सर्वकर्मणां निर्वोजत्वे कारणमित्यभिप्रायः । सामर्थ्यात् येन कर्मणा शरीरमारब्धं तत्प्रवृत्तफल्तादुपभोगेनैव क्षीयतेऽतो थान्यप्रवृत्तफलानि ज्ञानोत्पत्तेः प्राकृष्टतानि ज्ञानसहभावीनि च अतीतानेकजन्मकृतानि च तान्येव कर्मानि भस्मात् कुरुते ।"

Vide also the glossary of Anandagiri and the commentary of Madhusudan Sarasvati. Now, *sloka* 4 37 of the *Gita* clarifies the state of a Jivanmukta or a man who has realized the Brahman and has unfastened his chain of bondage or *maya* forever and ever in his life-time. A Jivanmukta lives in this world of nescience with his material body which is an outcome of nescience and that bit of nescience does not contradiet his attaining of Divine wisdom.

results, should be burned; but those which have begun to produce results, can be destroyed by going through experiences and reaping the results which are coming to us. You see to what depths the Hindu philosophers have gone? They divide the actions of their lives. Some have produced the body and drawn us towards these environments. So we must try our best to remove the causes of the degrading condition of our life. We must also know and remember that the past actions will produce results in future, which will bind us and keep us unhappy.

We have got this body. We have got our parents from whom this body has come. We cannot help it. But still we should try our best to make the proper use of our present life and time so that in future we shall not get such parents. Because we know that the continuity of existence is inevitable, and the soul is immortal and unquestionable. If you have any doubt of these things, you are then not ready to listen to these instructions. Because these instructions are for those who have passed that state of doubts and questionings, whether there is such a thing as a soul and whether it is immortal or not. This can be proved over and over again in various ways. So you will see how deep the Hindu philosophers have gone in regard to these questions. Some actions are going to produce their results and others are waiting, and if actions are yet to produce results, they can be burnt into ashes by the fire of wisdom. But those which have already begun to produce results, have gone too far, and we cannot help it. When you have burnt your finger, if that burning has gone too deep, the result cannot be destroyed and it has gone beyond the hope of healing. Similarly, the actions which have already begun to produce their results, we cannot remove them. We can remove only those which have been impotent by the fire of wisdom. There is nothing indeed in this world so purifying as wisdom or *jnana*.

He who has fitted himself for perfection through the practice of Yoga, obtains this wisdom in himself in time, and that comes spontaneously. It means that *jnana* is the most purifying thing of all, and it destroys sin. There is nothing so powerful as self-knowledge i.e. knowledge of ourselves and of our relation to God. This knowledge is the most potent thing

in the universe. It comes spontaneously, and no one can produce it. It is imparted by the teacher, or it may come by itself if you continue to practise Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, or other methods of Yoga. Doing unselfish work and keeping the ideal before your mind, purify your heart and follow the instructions of your master, without asking for any return. That real wisdom comes, but no one can tell at what time that wisdom will come, because it is not in any one's power.¹⁴

When will you be ready? That question will be answered by yourself. When the sun shines, you do not have to show it by the light of a torch. The moment you are ready, there it is and there is no delay, but if you feel you are not ready yet, go on doing as Sri Krishna said. You will have to reach perfection through the practice of Yoga. Make yourself well-fitted by purifying your body and mind and also by gaining control over yourself, and then you will be ready, and the wisdom will come to you.

The same idea has been more clearly described in this verse: "He who has faith, has subjugated his senses, and is intent upon wisdom, obtains *jñanam* and having obtained that wisdom (*jñanam*) he attains to supreme peace."¹⁵ He who has faith in the master and in the teachings of this spiritual science of Yoga also, attains that peace. First of all, you will have to know that there is such a thing as soul which is related to the Universal Spirit, and you should try to know how it is. If you do not have faith in yourself that it exists, you cannot do anything. So you will have to have self-confidence. If you are struggling after immortality, you will have to know that there is such a thing or how can you try? As long as you are making experiments, you must have a point from which to start, and then there will be beginning of the true life.

¹⁴

नहि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिदं विशते ।

तत् स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥५॥३८

Sankara said:

‘योगसंसिद्धः योगेन कर्मयोगेन (समाधियोगेन ज्ञानयोगेन) च ।’

¹⁵

श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं ततपरः संयतेन्द्रियः ।

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥४॥३९

Have faith in the master and in the teachings of spiritual minds. This simple faith may exist, but a person may not struggle hard. He may say, 'I do not doubt the existence of these things', but he has a dull feeling which is not desirable. In order to remove the dull feeling, there should be devotion to the master. This devotion is the second quality. Ask the master questions in order to gain that knowledge and try to do everything according to his instructions. There may be some one following a master and devoted to his teachings, but the master himself is not self-subjugated. In this case, the master also must practise to control mind and senses.

When your senses are attracted by external objects of sight, hearing and smell, instead of giving into these conditions, just withdraw your mind from external objects and be firm and determined. When someone is so well-qualified, he is sure to get the highest wisdom. And supreme peace comes with the dawning of that wisdom. When you strike a match in a cave where darkness has remained for centuries, the darkness is dissipated instantly. So, when the light of knowledge comes and the soul begins to shed the light of wisdom, at that very moment and instantaneously, the darkness of ignorance, selfishness, etc. will be dissipated. There will be no need of anything else when the light of wisdom has come. But he who is not faithful and devoted to the master and his teachings and who is, on the contrary, full of doubts, will not have that wisdom.

Sri Krishna says: "He who is ignorant, faithless, full of doubts, is ruined and cannot attain to that goal in this life. He will have to wait a long time. He will have to go through struggles until the time comes. He whose mind is full of doubts, does not obtain happiness; for him this world does not produce any good, nor can the next world produce good".¹⁶ He who has not studied the spiritual science, does not care for any instruction of the *Guru*; his mind is constantly on the material things, his only desire is for earthly pleasure, and his mind is full of ephemeral things. He whose mind does not care for spirituality and is doubtful and has no faith or realiza-

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अज्ञश्चाभ्रदधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।

नार्यं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥४॥४०

tion of any kind, is ruined and has fallen from the ideal, and cannot reach the goal.

Do not think that the meaning of the word 'ruined' is 'destroyed' or 'annihilated'. It means, it does not reach the goal and it means the failure, because the most sinful act is to have doubts. There is nothing more sinful than doubt when you are trying to follow the spiritual path.

Even in this life a man whose mind is constantly disturbed by doubt, cannot live well in the world and cannot earn his living. There is no peace or happiness in him and, so far as that man is concerned, whatever he does, is half-finished, because action is nothing if it is not accompanied by right thought and right knowledge. You may go and do the most virtuous acts, but if your mind is distracted and is not there, it is useless. External acts as such are useless, but when they are done with right kind of thought and feeling, it will produce wonderful results. If you give anything to the poor with a feeling that you are doing this (because it is in tune with the highest ideal and you sincerely feel it), that action will bring the best result and you will obtain from it more than what you do. But if you do it automatically and without having any feeling, your action will be fruitless. And that is the reason why we should develop our feelings and powers of our mind. We should remove the doubts and should not do things automatically. We will never do any thing because somebody has told us to do it. That will not produce the exulted result. But if you do it with a firm determination that it must produce this result, if you are strong enough in your faith, if you have a feeling that this is an action which will produce a reaction that will return to you, and, if you have a firm belief that it must be fulfilled right now or it is sure to come true, then you will get success. But, on the contrary, if you do certain things with an indifferent frame of mind, that will not produce good results. Make your thought and words coincide and harmonize. Whatever you are thinking, think intently and with a firm faith. The desired thing is bound to come, because your desire and thought will bring the result by itself. God will not fulfil your prayer, but it will be fulfilled by its own power. You must gain that power and that feeling and faith. You have what is called the secret

of power. All persons do not get proper results, because they do things automatically and have no faith or feeling. The *Gita* says that those whose souls are full of doubts, cannot attain to the higher realms after death. They cannot attain to the good results of their good works which they have done in this life. All the force thereof is gone. Then action is like dead action. It may produce some kind of result, but it will not come quickly. It is likely to be counteracted by other actions which are stronger, and the result will be very poor. If you doubt your relatives, you cannot love them, or do anything for them. You cannot feel happy. If you feel constantly that everybody is trying to poison you and harm you, how miserable you will be! Doubt is one of sins.

"The world after death does not belong to such a man or woman, and the pleasures of this life do not belong to him or her, therefore, thou shalt not doubt", and this is the instruction of Sri Krishna. He who has renounced all actions through the practice of *jnana*, whose doubts are cloven as under by wisdom and who is self-possessed, is never bound by the results of actions. He is one who has renounced the results of actions through doing the works, either for his master, or for the Lord Himself, renouncing the fruits of actions for the divine Being, working for Him just as a soldier would work under the command of the captain or general. So, when we can do the works of our daily life unconcerned about the results thereof like soldiers, simply obeying the command of our divine Master, or Guide, or Director, we attain to that freedom. "Therefore Arjuna, having rent as under the ignorance-begotten doubt that abides in your heart, with the sword of wisdom, rise and stand upon Yoga, and attain to the highest goal of life", says Sri Krishna.¹⁷

17

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंच्छिन्नसंशयम् ।

आत्मवन्नं न कर्माणि निवधन्ति धनञ्जय ॥

यस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।

द्वितैर्न संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥४।४१-४२

Madhusudan Sarasvati said:

‘एतादृशस्य सर्वानर्थमूलस्य संशयस्य निराकरणाय * * कर्मज्ञानमयीं द्विविधां ब्रह्मनिष्ठामुपसंहरति । (१) योगेन भगवदाराधनलक्षणसमन्वयबुद्धिरूपेण सन्नयस्तानि

Therefore, first of all, we must learn to clear our mind from doubts, then fix our minds upon the ideal, standing upon Karma Yoga i.e. work for work's sake. We should do our daily duties, keeping our heart and soul fixed upon the ideal, and then follow the instructions of the master until the highest wisdom is gained. This is the end of the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

There has been a belief that body and soul are one and inseparable. That is an old-fashioned false belief, but rational minds do not accept the idea that the soul is identified with the body. The cause of this false belief is ignorance. It happens for non-discrimination between the real nature of the soul and the material body. We should remember that the body is just like a garment, and when it is old, we throw it away and get a new one. And this idea is so strong that after a person dies, it goes with the soul in the next world. So you should destroy this false idea.

भगवति समर्पितानि कर्माणि येन, (२) यद्वा परमार्थदर्शनलक्षणेन योगेन सन्नयस्तानि
त्यक्तानि कर्माणि येन तं 'योगसन्नयस्तर्कमणम्' ।

That is, *jnana-vichāra* and *yoga* these two methods are the sure means to achieve success in the field of action (*Karmabhumi*), and this chapter of the *Gita* is known as the *brahmārpana-Karma-Yoga*.

CHAPTER XVIII

TWO PATHS : JNANA YOGA AND KARMA YOGA

Now the fifth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* begins. In the third and fourth chapters we have heard a great deal about Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga. We have also heard a great deal regarding renunciation and work. Sometimes Sri Krishna praises renunciation and at other times he asks Arjuna, his disciple, to be devoted to action. Here the question arises in the mind of Arjuna: "Thou hast praised the renunciation of action and also the devotion to action, which of these two is better?"¹

The question was whether we ought to renounce all actions, or we ought to be devoted to action or works. The time when this was spoken of by Arjuna was very old, indeed, and was about 1400 years before the birth of Christ. At that time the social life of the Hindus was very different from what we find today. The division of our worldly life were different from what we have today. Every nation has an ideal and every nation is

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सन्नयासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगश्च शंससि ।

यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥५॥१

Sri Krishna instructs Arjuna both *karma-sannyasa* and *karma-yoga*, and so it is a perplexing thing to observe both the practices at a time. At one time Sri Krishna says:

(क) अविनाशितु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।

(ख) य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं,

(ग) वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यम्—इत्यादौ तत्र तत्र आत्मविदः कर्माभाव उच्यते ।

And at other time he says,

(क) तस्माद् युध्यस्व भारत,

(ख) स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य,

(ग) कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते—इत्यादौ कर्मयोगऽपि प्रतिपद्यते ।

Therefore Arjuna was perplexed at the contradicted instructions of *karmayoga* and *karmāsakti*—renunciation and action.

struggling to attain to that ideal. The Hindus are one of the oldest nations of the world. They obtained a certain ideal which they considered to be the highest and best.

From the Vedic period down to the period of the *Mahabharata* when the battle of Kurukshetra took place, the highest ideal and prime-aim of the Hindu nations were the attainment of freedom and the realization of the ultimate truth of the universe, which is unchangeable, everlasting and permanent. Their search after that unchangeable truth was extremely vigorous. They devoted all energies and efforts of their lives to the attainment of that goal, and having discovered that ideal as the highest ideal of their earthly existence, they formed a society in accordance with the ideal to harmonize themselves with it. They divided the life upon this earth into four periods. The first one was the life of a student; the second was the life of a house-holder, the third was the forest life, i.e. life in retirement, and the fourth was the life of *sannyasa*, or the absolute renunciation for the attainment of absolute freedom. We have heard of the Sannyasins and Sannyasinis, i.e. monks and nuns. Swami Vivekananda was a Sannyasin, and he wrote that the life of the Sannyasin was considered to be the end and the highest one, for it was the life of renunciation.

It was the social custom of the Hindus in ancient time in India that first of all, a child, from the age of 5 to 11, used to go to the teacher or *Guru* of the family, and from him he received learning and life of renunciation. For three days he used to keep up that life. He went out to the house of his master or *Guru* and served him for three days and used to go from house to house, begging things for his master and lived the life of a disciple of the master. These three days were extended to three years, sometimes twelve years, sometimes over twelve years. The student's life was continued from the age of 12 to the age of 30. During that period of time the students of the three high castes, that is, the children of the Brahmins, the Kshatras and the Vaisvas—the priests, the warriors, and the merchants—went to the master's house and took the sacred thread of the Brahmin. It was the same as taking some vow that they used to be obedient to the master, served him and lived a pure and chaste life, etc. Sometimes, of course, this procedure varied.

The students used to leave their parents at that time and lived with the master. The teacher was the director and intellectual teacher. The student did not do anything without asking the permission of his teacher. He studied the Vedas and different branches of science, philosophy, music, art, etc. When he finished his studies, if he had a desire to live the householder's life, he used to go back to his parent's house and get married and beget children and performed the duties of a householder, until fifty years of age. During that period he used to live a perfectly moral life and perform all the sacrifices that are prescribed in the Vedas. We read about some of these sacrifices in the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

In the first period of the students' life, the student received instructions about the ideals that the phenomenal world is transitory and that there is a soul, or Reality of the universe, which is unchangeable and everlasting. But he did not realize that, he learnt it intellectually and, during the householder's life he prepared his life and fulfilled his desires which he had concerning the earthly existence. He used to perform the duties of life, train his children and give them in marriage, and when his grand-children were born or, if there were none born, when the children were grown up enough to take care of themselves and to have the property and business of the parents, then the parents, both father and mother, after the age of fifty, retired and went to the forest. From that time father and mother did not live as husband and wife, but lived as brother and sister.

Having performed all the duties of life, they tried to realize the sexless immortal soul. In truth, the soul is sexless, whether it is that of a man or of a woman. It has no sex. The physical form may be feminine or masculine, but the soul is sexless, and husband and wife, in ancient India, used to realize that.

There were duties of a forest life. During that time they used to study the Upanishads or Vedanta and lived like a philosopher of a pure and simple life, always keeping the highest ideal before the mind, and tried to prepare themselves for the attainment of the highest goal, or the emancipation of the soul from the attachments of the world. They might live in that state for 10 or 12 years. Some of them lived in that way for

three or six or seven years. The idea was that they used to live in that way, until they realized that they had no earthly relation. The husband did not think of himself as a husband and the wife did not think of herself as a wife, but as a soul. When that knowledge was gained, they were ready for *sannyasa* or absolute renunciation, not thinking of any duties of life. They wandered from place to place, or they came to the society and lived the ideal life and taught their experiences of life and discovered the highest truth in their own souls and lived amongst mankind simply to help them. Whatever action they used to perform, that was not for their own self, but for the good of humanity. That was the general rule. But there were some exceptions for the students who had no desire to live the life of a householder. From the life of a student they used to retire and take the fourth state of renunciation and lived that way without going back to the house of the parents from the teacher's house. They remained as disciples of the teacher as long as they lived, or they used to take the fourth state of absolute renunciation, and a good many of them used to do that. Even today there are many who live in the master's houses as disciples of the masters, without going back from the student's life into the householder's life. They remain students as long as they live. Many are now living in the monasteries observing the life of renunciation.

Some of them did retire and did become Sannyasins, but others who remained in the master's houses, went through all sacred ceremonies. They did not abandon those principles described by the scriptures. Every morning they made sacrifice, but they worshiped through the offering of oblations. They lighted a fire and poured butter on that fire. They poured other things which they consider to be the best for their earthly existence, the most sustaining, etc. They used to make offerings in the name of the supreme spirits. They also performed certain sacrifices in the name of their departed ancestors, the grandmother, the great-grandmother, and others. They believed that the departed spirits of their ancestors lived in the realm of the ancestors, and in their name sacrifices must be done. But one who went to the fourth state of renunciation, did not observe those sacrifices and did say that those were on the phenomenal plane and they were useless. They did not care for their

ancestors, nor for the duties towards their ancestors. They had realized the Supreme in their own souls and did never forget that. They constantly lived up to the ideal. They went out as teachers, or lived in a quiet place. They did not bother about social duties and so they did not mix with the society, because they saw all the vanities of earthly existence in it and, after realization of these vanities they did not care for it. They were perfectly happy, contented, and satisfied. They never worried over anything. They did not care even for their bodies. Whatever they desired to get in the way of food or clothes, they got without their seeking. They were satisfied with that. They lived the simplest life and were the happiest creatures in the world. If you wish, you may see such human beings living in harmony with nature and not as slaves. They are known as the living gods in this world.

Which is better to be overcome by misery, pain, disease and fear of death, or to be free from all of them? One who attains to the fourth state of life i.e. the life of renunciation (*sannyasa*), having cut off all kinds of attachment to the world and becoming free from all worldly ties, finds peace in his soul. That soul attains to that freedom and emancipation which is the ideal of all religions.

Christianity in the form of Protestantism does not preach that ideal. The Catholics took it and explained that ideal through the Eastern religions. In Judaism, this ideal was never known, because the ideal of Judaism was no other than earthly prosperity and begetting children and having numbers of them. Judaistic ideals are very strong amongst the Protestants of today. They seek nothing but transitory earthly prosperity. The Roman Catholics have some ideals higher than those of the Protestants, because they learned a great deal from Buddhism. Roman Catholicism is nothing but Buddhism in a different form and is an improvement upon Judaism. In Mohammedanism, you do not find that as they have inherited the Judaistic ideals of earthly prosperity. The Suffis got the ideal of absolute renunciation from Hinduism and Buddhism. India is the only country which gives rise to the ideal of renunciation and absolute freedom. Buddhism has its mother religion in Brahmanism, or Hinduism, or the religion of Vedanta.

The ideal or purpose of religion is to attain to salvation,

which means the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of all kinds of imperfection, selfishness, egotism, pain, worry, anxiety, and earthly attachment even to the ties of duty, either towards parents or children, or family or society. All these were considered to be the ties or bondage, and by freedom, they meant the emancipation from all these ties.

Real ideal is God, but God has no attachment of any kind towards any being, and in order to attain the Godhead, men of India realized that they must be free at first. God is absolutely free and, as long as we are bound by these worldly ties, we are neither God, nor demons, but are the human beings. But the goal of our earthly existence is to rise above humanity and reach Divinity. The first thing that stands as an obstacle in the way of attaining to this ideal, is the limitation or the ties, and they wanted to cut those ties so that they would be able to live like gods upon this earth, and their social system was based upon that ideal.

In the Western countries, this ideal is very rare. The nation has no real ideal except possession of earthly prosperity and national success. By national success is understood nothing but the success of one nation at the expense of another nation, just as the English nation has succeeded at the expense of other nations whom they conquered by force of arms and through commercialism, by sending products from their country to others and thus gaining wealth. The national ideal of the Western countries is not the absolute freedom and emancipation of the soul and also not the attainment of Divinity upon this earth. But that ideal is found among the Hindus, and Hinduism is the national ideal of the Hindus. This is not a recent thing. It was so in the beginning of the civilization of India, nearly five thousands years before the birth of Christ and the art of writing was known to the world. It was so when the Vedas were read and handed down from generation to generation from memory. Even in that dawn of the ancient civilization of India you will find that this ideal was like the shining light of time and like the sun above the horizon of human minds. And the Hindus have kept that ideal in spite of all national calamities and vicissitudes that the nation has gone through from those ancient days down to the present time. Even today the majority of the people in India do not care for political ideas. They

do not appeal to them. What is politics? It aims at nothing but earthly prosperity and success. The earth-bound individual ideals, when put together i.e. when put into abstract forms, become national ideals, and if you examine the ideals of individuals, you will find that very few care for that which is beyond the senses.

Even during the first three periods of earthly life, according to the specific methods of Hindu devotion, one should perform all the works and duties of life, and then he attains to the renunciation of action. First, devotion to action and then renunciation are necessary in one's life. Here Arjuna, who is on the battle-field of Kurukshetra, is ready to do his duty as a chief of the warrior caste. Sri Krishna says to him: "Go and fight and perform your duties". But Arjuna was ready to renounce and wanted to retire from the battle-field and to live the life of a Sannyasin. But Sri Krishna would not advise him to do so, because he knew that Arjuna was not ready to renounce the world.

Here a question rose in Arjuna's mind. "If renunciation is the highest ideal of human beings, then why should one be devoted to action and spend the time for nothing?" Therefore, he asked that question, "which of these two is better; please explain it to me".² Sri Krishna answered his question by saying: "Both renunciation of action and devotion to action lead to the same goal i.e. to the attainment of peace: But devotion to action is better for ordinary mortals who have not acquired self-knowledge, and it is good for the purification of the heart".³ One should renounce all actions of life except the actions that are necessary for taking care of the body, eating food or drinking water: or taking a short walk; except these he should have no other duties to perform. But that renunciation of action comes to one who has learned to realize the true nature of his soul as divine, as one with the absolute reality of the universe.

"He who sees inaction in the midst of activity and sees activity in the midst of inaction, is the real knower of truth and

² Vide the *Gita*, V. 1.

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सन्नथासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।

तयोस्तु कर्मसन्नथासात् कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥५।२

is the true worker",⁴ and that means inaction in respect of the true Self who is above and beyond all activities. It may be mind or body, or sense or intellect, and these are constantly active. When that knowledge is attained, the person rises above all duties, but still he will have to do some kind of work. And it is true that as long as we are living in the society, we will have to perform some duties, and until and unless duties are finished, full renunciation cannot take place.

Through renunciation, what should we gain? We should gain the purification of the heart (*chittashuddhi*), as we have explained several times. By purification of the heart or mind is meant the removal of passions, anger, hatred, jealousy, egotism, lying, and selfishness. Besides the removal of these from the heart, there must be the development of self-control, concentration, subjugation of the senses, forbearance of hardship, and attainment of dispassion and when these objectives have been gained, we are to know that the heart is purified. When one does not get angry very easily, when one is not influenced by ambition, or hatred, or jealousy, or egotism, or hypocrisy, or self-conceit etc., but, on the contrary, who practises the control of mind, senses, and all the dual experiences like pain and pleasure, heat and cold, and who develops discrimination, dispassion and non-attachment, we know then the person concerned is ready for renunciation. If you have seen that all these things of the world are transitory and evanescent, they do not appeal to you and you do not also care for them, and at that time your mind and soul go towards the realization of the highest Truth, and then you are ready for renunciation. But if you are attached to the world and have duties to perform, you will have to live and perform these duties. Do not think that to be free from the idea of duty is wrong, because it is one of the conditions of our progress in spiritual life. If you hold out one ideal of the householder for all human beings, no matter in what stage of spiritual evolution they may be, you are making a great mistake. But the Hindu nation understood that each individual is on a different plane of existence, so each one must have a different ideal, and let every one have perfect freedom to live up to that ideal, and the conditions

⁴ Vide the *Gita*, IV. 18.

are arranged to give them appropriate chances for all those ideals. There are two different ways for attaining God or goal of renunciation. One is the way of Karma Yoga as already discussed. The second is the way of Jnana Yoga. Through the purification of heart comes self-knowledge, or knowledge of the Divine Being, which is the absolute unchangeable truth of the universe, and that is what is meant by Jnana Yoga. The path of Jnana Yoga is shorter than the path of Karma Yoga, but you must remember that the path of knowledge (Jnana Yoga) is shorter for those whose hearts are purified, otherwise it will be a waste of time.

"Know him to be the renouncer of actions who does not hate or desire and who is free from the opposites of heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc. Such a person attains to that freedom very easily".⁵ This is the ideal given to the masses to hold before their eyes during their earthly existence.

In the Western countries, this state of renunciation is considered to be a state of indifference which is something undesirable. Why should we not hate things which are disagreeable, and why should we not desire things which are desirable and may bring comforts and pleasures to our life? But indifference, wrongly spoken of as such, is not to be considered as a thing undesirable, as it is a reality and not indifference. When you begin to see the true nature of things, you understood difference between the soul and the spiritual laws of the universe, which you hate at one time and like at another time. For instance, you may hate at present the life of renunciation, but the time will come when you will say you have no duties to perform, and idea of duty will drop off from your soul. The nearer we come to the ideal of freedom, the easier it becomes for us to renounce. Then renunciation becomes natural. The further we go towards the East, the farther the West is left behind, said Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa.

⁵ ज्ञेयः स नित्यसन्न्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो दि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात् प्रमुच्यते ॥५॥३

The word *nitya-sannyasi* means one who performs work being detached from asking the result and remains as *nishkama* or *akama*. A *nitya-sannyasi* or man of renunciation performs works in the sense of love and worship.

As long as we are living on the relative plane and consider the objects of phenomena as real, we have desires for certain things and hatred for the rest, but when we begin to see that which is beyond relativity and beyond the relation of our mind to the material world through the sense perceptions, at that very moment, the idea of hatred or desire for things vanishes and then we see Divinity everywhere. He who realizes Divinity everywhere, does not see good or evil in the world, and it may seem strange to him. But it is true. There is no room for good or evil in this world for one who sees the Divinity everywhere. Good and evil are relative terms, and this idea remains in the relative phenomenal world.

As long as we have a certain standard of good, that which falls short of the standard, we call it evil, and that which harmonizes with our standard, we call it good. So it is with everybody. The householder's duties are good so long as one is a householder, but when one takes to the forest life, for him there are other duties. He would live with his wife, not having the relation of husband and wife. That may seem strange to a householder. But to one who lives the forest life, it is an essential thing to be performed and is the highest. Then when he goes to become a Sannyasin, he should not even have the wife as his sister, but he sees her as the all-pervading sexless soul, and live up to it. That is the idea. Duty in one section of life is good so long as the person is living on that plane, but when he has risen above that plane, that duty no longer can bind him. The same thing happens in every country. As long as you are living in society, you have social duties, but when you live in a quiet place all alone, you have no social duties. If you retire from the family, you have no family duties. When you go to the office, you have official duties and when you come home, you have household duties. But when you take rest for two or three months and do not go to the office or leave the family, you may have duties towards your friends, but all those other duties have stopped for the time being. So when you can retire entirely from the world, spiritually realizing that this world is not your home, but you are the soul, your home is the abode of absolute bliss and freedom, and intelligence and peace. When you know that you do not belong to any society or nation, but you are free—like the atmosphere around this earth.

you then belong to the limitless divine universe, and you go even beyond the ideal of a citizen of the world. Then you become the saviour of the universe and nothing can bind you. So you see that this apparent indifference is not to be despised, as is done by the Western minds. One who does not desire to get anything on the highest plane, must go through all the experiences of the lower planes also, either in this life, or in a previous life. It is not like becoming a stone or a dead piece of wood lost to all feelings, but it is realizing the transitoriness of these things, and he must live above all binding conditions or limitations and that is the idea. It would have been indifference, if he did not have the feeling of the ephemeral and transitory nature of the phenomenal world and did not realize his true Self, which is immortal and perfect.

Some people mistake this state of perfection and God-consciousness for indifference (from the duties of the world) and make others believe to be indifferent to these earthly conditions, but Vedanta does not teach us to kill our earthly desires and passions, but teaches to rise above them, to keep them under our subjection and to see that there is no substance of life in them and also no attraction in them. Thus we can rise above them and do not have to kill our feelings. We must have them and direct our energy towards the highest which is the aim and real object.

Vedanta does not tell you to be cruel towards friends and relatives and not to turn them out into the street and to be heartless. If you are living with them, realize that their imperfections are not your ideal, and so do not be affected by their imperfections, but rise above them, and be free like the Divine Being without having imperfections and limitations. So it is not the same as indifference, which means avoidance, and negligence to duties.

The same ideal which I have just described, is the ideal of Jnana Yoga, and it is also of the Karma Yoga, that teaches to rise above all imperfections and have self-mastery and self-knowledge. Only those who are not wise and are not seers of Truth, make the distinction between the ideal of Karma Yoga and that of Jnana Yoga and also between the ideal of renunciation and that of devotion to action, but a wise man sees that they both lead to the same goal. All these different

branches of Yoga lead really to the same goal. Bhakti Yoga leads men to the paths of devotion and worship, and through all such things one can attain to the highest goal. Through the practice of Raja Yoga i.e. through concentration and meditation, everyone reaches there. All the different religions of the world teach these paths, either independently or exclusively, or by describing one or two as higher than other paths.

Christianity teaches Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Buddhism teaches Karma Yoga mostly. Islam teaches Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Prophet Mohammed says: "Go and do philanthropic work". The Roman Catholics work also. But none of these teaches Jnana or Raja Yoga exclusively. In India, we find that these different methods have been practiced from ancient times and, consequently, the religion of Vedanta includes all these different methods given or proposed by different religions of the world. Vedanta thus provides the solid and formless foundation of that universal religion, which is the future religion of humanity.

You may take the path of philanthropic work that you find in Vedanta. All kinds of rational devotion and worship have their approval in Vedanta. You may practise concentration and meditation of Raja Yoga, or you may accept the tenets of Jnana Yoga. Jnana Yoga means logical and rational arguments, and everything that appeals to intellect and intuitions. So you see nothing is left out. The activity aspect, the meditative aspect, and the philanthropic aspect scheme of worship or devotion—all these are advocated and included in the grand teachings of Vedanta. The attainment of self-knowledge, the realization of the absolute Truth and the attaining complete freedom and perfection—you may attain or get through the worship of personal God also (if you believe in a personal God). If you do not believe in such a God, you can go on through Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Then you try to see inaction (*akarma*) in the midst of action, try to see existence of the *Atman* in all actions, and through that you attain to the same goal. But the self or the *Atman* is beyond all activity. The *Atman* cannot be realized by any action, nor it is the result of any action. If you are very intellectually minded, exercise your intellect and discrimination. If you see that a particular thing does not attract or please you.

give it up, and do that which pleases you. If you like the life of retirement, adopt it. Religion of Vedanta gives everyone absolute freedom to choose one's ideal.

You have also absolute freedom in society, but in your religion, you are like a slave⁶ When a Hindu takes up the religious life of a monk, he is free from caste laws, though, as long as he lives in society, he is bound by caste laws. It must be remembered that spiritual life means the attainment of freedom, and the nearer you can come to the ideal, the more spiritual you are considered to be. A Sannyasin who has given up his home and hearth, and has left and transformed his selfish desires, can easily become perfect. A real Sannyasin has no attachment, and does not possess anything in the world. He does not even live in any place for a long time, because living in one place for a long time makes one attached to different things, and in that way, he transcends the plane of limitations. So he wanders and possesses no home of his own. This ideal cannot be accepted in the Western country. But still you (being the citizens of the Western land) must realize that it is the highest ideal, whether or not you can accept it now. You must remember that freedom is the highest goal. The time will come when you will be disgusted with the life you are living. If you have once got the glimpse of that absolute freedom you will not long for it. So you remember that nothing will satisfy your soul except the attainment of freedom, which is the knowledge of the *Atman*.

You are not free from imperfections, from attainment, not free from selfishness; when that freedom is attained by a nation, that nation has attained the goal of all religions, and a nation cannot attain to the goal, unless the individuals forming that nation, have attained to it. If the individual members of the society hold this ideal before their minds and live up to it, their friends will imbibe it and follow their example, and gradually this ideal will permeate through all the stages of life and bring the best results, even on this earth.

It is for this reason America needs the help of Vedanta to a great extent, because it is a young nation and must have the highest ideal which will harmonize with the ideal of freedom.

⁶ The Swami says here about Christian religion, which does not recognise freedom of any soul.

Let that ideal work in an atmosphere of freedom, but it has its binding too. The ideal of renunciation should be held, because renunciation means absolute freedom. That is what Sri Krishna has explained so beautifully. The highest wisdom (*jnana*), the practice of devotion (*bhakti*), and the perfect devotion through action (*karma*) lead to the same goal, and that goal is freedom⁷ through renunciation. He who realizes this, realizes the ultimate truth of the universe. So we must know what is the highest truth first. It is the highest, because it is taught that whole phenomenal world is ephemeral and transitory and the true nature of the soul is above all changes. No one can deny this truth. No one who has got a glimpse of the true nature of the soul, can deny this fact, as it is the highest.

Nothing is higher than Truth. There is no need of so-called learning and book-knowledge. There is no question about your being immortal. If, however, you doubt your immortality, realize yourself and you will find that God is one and unique, and He does not change. Try to take away all the attributes from Him, but those you cannot take away. Everything else outside of God is subject to evolution, and everything outside of your true Self is changeable and is subject to evolution, growth, progress, decay, and death. But God transcends all these changes. He is immortal. Immortality means the unchangeable truth, and we possess it. We do not have to go outside anywhere to get it from outside, but it is a part of ourselves and we are one with it. Our true nature is that, otherwise it would not love freedom. As long as there is ardent desire and longing for freedom in every soul, that freedom is not attained. So we must know that freedom. It is a part of ourself. We have it already, but we do not realize it thoroughly. So we shall have to realize that it is the highest.

Jesus the Christ meant the same thing when he said: "And you shall know the truth and truth shall make you free". So there is harmony between the teachings of Sri Krishna and those of Jesus. Whether Jesus learned it from India or not, still the ideal of Jesus the Christ was the same as we find it in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and all the seers of Truth have said the same thing. Lord Buddha said the same thing. If you mean

⁷ Freedom from the bondage of *samsara* or nescience.

by salvation freedom, there is no quarrel, no fight and no dispute. It means the emancipation of the soul. So that self-knowledge leads to renunciation, and *sannyasa* is the state of life where we realize it and live up to it. It is the most essential part and we cannot live without it.

CHAPTER XIX

REAL INDIFFERENCE OR NON-ATTACHMENT

It has already been said that there are two distinctive paths, one is the path of renunciation (*sannyasa*) and the other is the path of action (*karma*) or devotion (*bhakti*). The first is adopted by those who practise Jnana Yoga. The first one can be said to be the path of discrimination (*viveka*) or knowledge (*vichara* or *jnana*). One who sees the Divinity, realizes the true nature of the divine Self. He has no duty of his own or any kind. He does not recognise his parents or family relations or social duties as his bindings. He may serve them through the sense of love and live like a living god on earth. As he realizes the Brahman, he becomes the Brahman (*'brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati'*). It is very difficult for the Western mind to understand this, because it is not accustomed to this kind of thought or idea. But, in India, this idea is very common.

Those who are initiated in the vow of *sannyasa* (*sannyasa-vrata*), renounce all compulsory duties of the world. Now it can be asked as to who can really renounce duties of the world. He is certainly not an ignorant person who is attached to the world of delusion and whose mind is packed up with worldly desires, ambitions, passions and earthly propensities. Such a man, or a worldly-minded man, cannot renounce anything, and even they cannot conceive about the idea of renunciation. If he gets into the lonely forest, he would think of those desires or desired things, nay, the hoarded impressions of the desires of his life then float in his mental sea, will disturb him and, consequently, he goes almost insane. But think of the man who has no desire, or who has subdued or controlled his desires, and whose thoughts and ideas are on the highest plane and are tuned with the Infinity or Supreme Spirit. That realized and emancipated man enjoys eternal peace and happiness.

Now what do we mean by duty? Duty means a kind of chain or bondage or slavery. So long as we have duties without the sense of love, whether they are of the best kind or not, they are regarded as bondage. The duty towards the parents may

be very good and duty towards humanity may be very good and beneficial, but this duty binds just as well. A golden chain binds in the same manner as an iron chain and the binding produced by both is the same. But one who has renounced all duties (of obligation) after realizing the Divinity everywhere and in everything and remaining unattached on the relative plane of the world, is divine and free. He lives and is also regarded as the living God on this earth. He is called a Jnana Yogi. But it is very difficult to be or to remain in that state. Very few are ready for it. The majority of people who are on the human plane, cannot get rid of this idea of duty which is always accompanied by the sense of obligation. And so it is a kind of attachment. It is a limitation and binding. The moment you begin to see or realize that you are the child of God and have no binding and attachment, all ideas of duty vanish. Then you cannot have a special object of love like husband, or wife, or child, but you will realize that God pervades everything of the world, and God is in everything for you.

Ordinary people may think *sannyasa* as state of indifference, but it is not that. It is not a kind of laziness or weakness or negligence of works, but it is the divine and true feeling for freedom that vibrates all the time beyond limitations. That feeling or knowledge comes to a limited few, but the rest of the people work, following the path of Karma Yoga, until that time comes when they rise above all sense duties and obligations, and until they can realize that they are not ordinary human beings or mortals, but are immortal children of the Almighty, and father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all near and dear ones appear to them as the representatives of God.

This *sannyasa* or non-attachment is not a state of insanity. It is not an abnormal state of the mind, but it is the preparatory for getting the divine state of realization of *brahmanubhuti*. Through Karma Yoga one can also attain to that knowledge of understanding that if the works are done not for any selfish motive but for the purification of the heart or mind (*chittashuddhi*), then purification of heart brings the enlightenment of the *Atman* or Brahman. But the heart or mind is purified when the idea of absolute purity or chastity remains in the soul and the mind is not agitated or disturbed by the modifications of the passions and earthly desires. Now it may

be asked as to why God has given so many desires and passions and ambitions to men of the world. But really God has not given them to men, rather they have inherited them from their animal ancestors through the process of gradual evolution. Man has come from the animals through cycle of births and deaths, and, therefore, it is natural to inherit the past habits and natures of the past incarnations, which lie in the bed of the subconsciousness or unconsciousness in the form impressions (*samskaras*). However, the world and God are the two opposite poles of a magnet: one who is absorbed in the world, cannot think of God, and the other being absorbed in God, cannot think of the contingent world. In fact, one cannot serve God and mammon at the same time

The razor-edge path of renunciation (*sannyasa* or *tyaga*) is very difficult to follow for those whose heart or mind is not purified and calm. In the *Katha Upanishad*, this state of renunciation, which is included in the Jnana Yoga, has been described as difficult path: "*kshurasya dhara nishita duratyaya, durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti*" i.e. the wise and realized ones say that the paths of discrimination and renunciation are very difficult, as they seem sharp like the razor-edge ones. That is why Sri Krishna has described in the beginning of the fifth chapter of the *Gita* the path of Jnana Yoga (vide the *slokas*, V. 6-13)

Let me read out the *slokas* (6-13) of this fifth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which will give you some ideas of the state of renunciation or *sannyasa*. The *slokas* are:

सन्नधासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
 योगमुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म न चिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥
 योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
 सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥
 नैव किञ्चित् करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्तत्तत् ।
 पश्यन् शृण्वन् स्पृशन् जिघ्रक्षन् गच्छन् स्वप्नन् श्वसन् ॥
 प्रलपन् विसृजन् गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
 इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥
 ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
 लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाभ्रसा ॥

कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।
 योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥
 मुक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।
 अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥
 सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
 नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥

That is, without *nishkama-karmayoga* (performance of action without asking result) real state of renunciation (*paramartha-sannyasa*) or the knowledge of the *Atman* is not attained. The *yoga-yukta* Muni or Sannyasi instantly attains to Brahman-knowledge. Desireless (i.e. without desire for getting fruits of actions) Karma Yoga brings purification of mind or heart and brings a state from where a Jnani, or a realized man, sees everything and everyone as the manifestation of God or the Brahman. The realized man considers everything and everyone as his Divine Self, and he performs all works for the welfare of the world and never makes him entangled in the net of result of the actions. The realized man sees everything, hears everything, touches everything, smells and eats everything, moves, sleeps, breathes and does all actions thinking himself not as an agent. In fact, he does everything in this world of nescience being detached from all good or bad results (*papa-punya*) like water which cannot wet the surface of the lotus-leaf. A Jnani performs every action without attachment, or he does everything as the work of worship of God, and lives with his body with the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit. In the fourth chapter, we have seen that a realized man sees i.e. realizes the presence of the *Atman* in all actions and considers the *Atman* as the living force of every action (“कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः”) In fact, a man of God-realization does everything in this world as a *Jivanmukta* being detached from the results of actions, good or bad, and he thinks that God is everything and lives in everything. He lives in contentment and peace, living in this world of diversity.

So renunciation of action² is hard to attain without the

¹ Vide the *Gita*, V. 6-13.

² ‘कर्मसक्तिः वा कर्मफलासक्तिः त्यागः’ ।

practice of Karma Yoga, but those who practise Yoga, attain to the realization of the Brahman very soon.³ One who performs actions, leaving the results of those actions to the Supreme Spirit, does not claim them as his own, and when he performs actions in that way, although he does not claim the results of those actions, he gets the best results in the form of purification of the heart,⁴ because he does not wish any return. He leaves the results of works in the hands of the Almighty, and there he stops with contentment.⁵

Think of the great advantage to that person who can work in this way of non-attachment. He never worries about the results. Even when he performs his duties, he does them with greatest care, using the whole of his ability and power, and, after working so hard with intense activity and concentration, if the desired results do not come, he says to himself, 'I have done my duty, I have done my best, if the result has not come what else can I do', and that thought would kill worry and anxiety, and his mind becomes peaceful and restful. But the moment he wishes the results of his actions, his mind is full of worry and anxiety, and he has neither peace nor rest. He cannot even sleep at night and is disturbed all the time.

Some people may think, 'what will that person do who has attained to that supreme knowledge and has renounced all actions?' He will live in the Spirit all the time, he communes with the spirit, and if, for a moment his mind and soul be distracted from the Spirit he feels unhappy and miserable, just as an ordinary worldly person will be miserable when he loses things which he possesses. So his struggle is to keep on that highest plane all the time, forgetting all transitory things of the phenomenal plane. He does not remain there all the time, and it is very difficult to stay there. One who can stay there continuously, does not live long, his body will stop all its activities, he will not be able to eat or drink or do any physical works that are necessary for protection of the body. His body drops off like a dead leaf from a tree in the full, but still he is the living example of one who has conquered the world.

³ Vide the *Gita*, V. 6.

⁴ Vide the *Gita*, V. 11

⁵ Vide the *Gita*, V. 13

You heard of Totapuri, one of the great teachers of Sri Ramakrishna. He was one of those who renounced everything of the world. He wandered from place to place. He would not sleep under a roof or stay in any place for more than two or three days. He had no worldly thought or desire, and having conquered all the passions, ambitions, and everything by which the ordinary worldly man is attracted, he lived like a master and not like a slave. There have been many such instances as this in India, and the ideal of those who follow the path of *jñāna*, or take up the path of renunciation (*sannyāsa*), is to live like that, because they know that all these actions do not proceed from the true nature of the soul, but they are the activities of the mind, senses and physical organisms. The soul is actionless in reality ; it is like the witness (*sākṣi*).

The Reality of the universe is like a witness, and that which appears as activity, is changeable and phenomenal. It is the force or power which proceeds from that infinite source of actions, and this force is called *māyā*.⁶ The *māyā* or delusion creates all kinds of chain, and makes us forget that unchangeable Reality. It puts a veil over all reality like a cloud. Our eyes are covered with a veil of relativity, so we mistake the changeable phenomena for the unchangeable or absolute Truth. Then we are self-deluded and think of ourselves as one with the material body. Then we cannot know that the soul lives in the body and is not one with the body

What is the conception of the soul with an ordinary person? Is it with a physical form with flesh and blood? He never thinks for a moment that the soul is inseparable and immortal and is like a witness of all the activities of mind, senses and body. He never thinks, because he is deluded. But he who is equipped with Yoga, whose heart is purified, who is self-subjugated, whose senses are subdued and whose real self has become the Self of all beings, is not tainted or affected by the results of those actions.

⁶ Here the Swami means to say that from the standpoint of creation or projection, *māyā* (or nescience) is considered as the force (*śakti*) of the (determinate or *saguṇa*) Brahman: '*paramēśha-śakti*' otherwise the indeterminate or *nirguṇa* Brahman is devoid of all adjuncts (*upādhis*), all qualifications (*guṇas*) and all powers (*śaktis*). The real status or essence of the Brahman is indeterminateness. Attributes (*guṇas*) and forces (*śaktis*) are conceived for the cause of delusive creation or projection.

This describes the character of one who has renounced everything. His eyes are open and he begins to see that these duties are trivial. His self and mind are balanced, peaceful and subjugated. His mind obeys him and is not carried away by any feelings, or thoughts, or ideas, which rise in the mind, but they remain under his control. Sometimes, perhaps, you have noticed in your own life that some thought may rise in your mind, but you do not allow them to govern you, but keep it under control, and it vanishes in no time. Whether that thought be good or bad, still you have noticed that when you can exercise that kind of control over the door of your mind, you become self-subjugated.

When the senses are subdued, you can direct your mind and power of hearing. Even when you are listening to some beautiful music, you can put your mind on a higher plane. You can practise that. Just withdraw your mind from that and fix it on the highest plane. Exercise the power of concentration and you will not hear what is going on, just as you do not hear the tick of the clock when you are absorbed in reading some interesting book or article which appeals to you. You may read a very interesting thing, but, if your mind is absorbed in something different, you do not hear, and if your eyes are attracted by some beautiful sight, withdraw your power of seeing and you will conquer the sense of hearing and seeing. The illustration is given in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, of a tortoise who can withdraw his limbs within his shell when frightened (vide 2.58). Every individual soul can exercise that power of self-control through practice. You must not think you do not possess that power, as it is latent within you and in each soul. If you were born in India, you would have heard of it from your childhood, but, in Western countries, you do not hear of it, because the people know just a little, if at all, about it.⁷ This ideal floats in the atmosphere in spiritual India, and that unconsciously takes possession of our soul and we long for it and try to gain that mastery which can be called the process of Jnana Yoga. One who renounces action, should subdue his senses and whole self and become the Self of all

⁷It should be remembered that the Swami delivered these *Gita* lectures in America, before the Western audiences.

being. Your true Self will be the same as the true Self of all beings, because the true Self is one and it is not many.

Everything outside of the Divine Self is temporary, changeable, and phenomenal. There is only one thing in the universe, which is not phenomenal, and is no many. Some people say that there are many realities, and it is true that some of the Western philosophers think this, but that is not correct. Whenever you admit the idea of so many realities, than it is no other than *maya* or nescience, and it becomes phenomenal and is limited. This fine perception is not generally discovered by worldly minded men, because their minds do not work on that plane. Some of the Western philosophers have intellectually grasped this fine idea, but, in India, the Hindu mind goes beyond all thoughts. The Hindus do not hesitate to push their mind and intellect as far as that. They do this until they come to the point when they become one with the absolute Being. That is one superb greatness which we find in India in that line.⁸ Regarding the Hindus, it is a fact that not only the worldly prosperity, but they can give up everything for the realization of Truth as well as for religion. For religion the Hindus do everything. Now it can be asked as to which one gains in the end: the man who is ready to give up his life for earthly prosperity and wealth, and the man who is ready to give up every-thing for the realization of the eternal Truth. Really the one gains for the world of sense on the phenomenal plane, and the other gains on the higher plane; one gains transitory worldly happiness and the other gains other-worldly eternal happiness.

Our true Self is one and all-pervading, and we are all one with the Divine Self. The same witness-like soul or *Atman* manifests itself through that which has become the source of consciousness and intelligence. It is in man and in all lower

⁸ Here the Swami (Abhedananda) means to say that most of the people of the Western countries are attached to worldly pomp and luxury, which divert them from spiritual thinking and from concentration and meditation on the immortal *Atman* which is the prime aim of human life. After returning from the Western countries, Swami Vivekananda also said that the Western nations possess abundant wealth and riches, but they lack in their spirituality. And, in this respect, Indian peoples are more alert, and are conscious of their spiritual treasure. But there are many savants and religious men in the West, who seek for their inward peace and happiness and dedicate their mind to God.

creatures and animals. It manifests itself from the minutest atom to the highest God, as this intelligent Being is all-pervading.

There a differentiation to be made between the working of the body and that of the soul. As long as you see me sitting, or walking, or talking, or doing any work, so long it is *jivatma* which is working in conjunction with mind, senses, and physical form. But these mediums are the limitations or limiting adjuncts (*upādhus*). So long as you see the centre of the universe, the true Spirit will remain as limited by nescience. So you will have to realize the Spirit or *Atman*, which transcends all limitations of adjuncts and mediums. Without realizing that unchangeable *Atman*, one cannot become divine. No matter what you do, you cannot be peaceful without knowing that one basic truth and without going into the abode of eternal peace. Then all the phenomena vanish means you lose their changing and transitory nature and then you come to realize the actionless divine essence. Even then you go beyond personal God who appears to you like phenomena. Personal God or Creator can exist in relation to His creatures, but when the creation has vanished, i.e. all phenomenal forms have disappeared and when names and forms have gone out of our minds as well as out of the region of our consciousness, Creator also vanishes. He vanishes, but His essence remains. The indeterminate Brahman is the essence of the Creator. The creator is the termination or last limit of the world of nescience or *maya*, and the indeterminate Brahman transcends all limitations and adjuncts.

The person who has attained to that knowledge of the Brahman, knows that he does not do anything. "I do nothing at all" thus think the Yogi who knows the absolute Truth

In the third chapter, *karmavoga*, it has already been said that a Self-realized man (*ātma jnāni*) has nothing to do in this world for his own interest. And if they perform any work, they perform for the good and welfare of the multitude.¹⁰ In fact a Self-realized man who has cut asunder his chain of *maya*, or a

⁹ नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन । ३।१८

¹⁰ (क) लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपद्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि । ३।२०

(ख) कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्ताश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् । ३।२५

Yogi, knows well that nature, constituted out of three *gunas* like *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, forces all living creatures to do work and works are no other than the results of *avidya* or nescience. So a Jnani or Yogi is not involved in any selfish work which will bind him (in ignorance). He knows or is fully conscious of the fact that the *Atman* is ever actionless, is above work, and works are done by the individual ego who is involved in *ahamkara*¹¹ and who thinks that he is the master of everything. A Jnani knows that he is really the *Atman* who is witness (*sākṣi*), pure intelligence (*chetā*) and above all qualities (*nirguna*). The *Atman* may be known as the essence of the ego or individual soul (*jīva*).

Generally it is very difficult to comprehend that which is the source of intelligence and makes you feel that you are living and existing and doing all things, but a Jnani who has realized the *Atman*, knows the *Atman* as an essence of the egos remains the same. That essence is sometimes called the knower of all mental and physical changes.

"I do nothing at all" thus thinks a Yogi who knows the absolute Truth. Even one who worships Gods through the path of *bhakti*, says: "I do nothing at all, but God does every thing". Arjuna said the same thing without referring to God. He did it by the power of discrimination. He learns it, so left the personal God aside. He was not devited to any one except the eternal Truth which is nameless and formless, and is the essence of the personal God. Though discrimination and knowledge (*viveka* and *vichara*), by saying "not this, not that", (*neti neti*) and searching for the Reality or essence of the universe and knowing that the ego does not do anything at all, every man can come to the same goal and same right decision. The starting points of two paths may be entirely different, but they at last come to the same destination. Christ said, "what is mine, is thine". He was a Bhakta and never thought of God through the path of discrimination (*vichara*), because he did not come to preach that, but still his expressions harmonize and coincide with the expressions of one who has followed the path of Jnana Yoga.

A Jnani does not say, it is the will of God. He would

¹¹ अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते।३।२७

say it is *maya*, it is all relativity, it is all phenomenal appearances, and it is not reality. Even the will of God is not a Reality to him, because God is phenomenal to him, or God is within the circle of nescience. See how far the Jnani would go. He is not deluded by any thought which a Bhakta appreciates. Devotional worship does not appeal to him, but still he reaches the same goal

'I do nothing at all'—thus thinks a Yogi who knows the Truth. While seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, talking, holding, opening and closing his eyes, and performing all his actions, he claims that he is not doing anything, but that his senses are acting. He holds this thought all the time that the senses are active, but he is beyond the senses and is the true Self, or the Reality of the universe.

A Jnani thinks that senses and sense-activities, which are said to be the modifications of the mind, cannot affect his real self. Now, when you sit in meditation and withdraw yourself, i.e. your mind entirely, you will know that you are not affected by any thought or idea. Those who have been going through the lessons of the second series, will find meditation of that kind. If you can meditate in the purest sense and have once realized the Truth, you will never forget it in your life. Then nothing else will appeal to you, and you will see the Reality face to face.

A Jnani always holds that thought in his mind. It is not mere imagination, but by right discrimination and proper analysis he has come to the conclusion that the true Self is actionless. He offers all the work of senses, mind, and body to the Brahman, which is the unchangeable Spirit. He does not offer the senses as an oblation to a personal deity, but thinking of the Brahman or the true Self as actionless and holding that thought and knowledge in his mind, while performing all works, he offers actions as oblations to the fire of knowledge which burns all the activities with their results.¹²

When he performs any physical work, such as eating or drinking or taking care of the body, or walking, or doing any work for the good of humanity, he leaves the results and offers them to the Brahman, and, therefore, he is not contaminated

¹² Vide the *Gita*, IV. 19.

by the world, just as a lotus leaf is never affected or made wet by water. Put a drop of water on a lotus leaf, it will float like a drop of mercury. So that Jnana Yogi who has realized the absolute Truth, has become like a lotus leaf in the water of this world. As a lotus leaf, growing in water, remains untouched by it, so a Yogi, living in water of the world and coming out of it, remains untouched by it. He may go and live with all the wicked men, but they will not be able to affect him, and is above them. What the most wicked people are doing, would not appeal to him, rather he would pity and sympathise with them and try to help them by pitying them and putting himself in their place, but still he himself is not affected by them.

If that Jnani has a belief in a personal God, or when he is thinking of himself as one of many of the individual egos, even then he performs works and offers the results to the personal God. He performs works just as a servant would perform works for his master. When a servant performs a duty, the results go to the master. The soldier performs his duty in the battle-field and gives his life, but all the results of his works go to the governor or king or emperor. So the individual ego should perform the works remembering that he is the soldier of the almighty God.

Those who are following the path of devotion to action and have not reached that state of knowledge, would perform the works and duties with their body, mind, intellect, senses and sense powers. They do all those works, holding the ideal before their mind that they are performing all these activities, not for earthly prosperity, not for gain or name or fame, not for the fulfilment of ambition or desires, but for the *Atman*. If they keep that thought in their mind, they will be free from the bondages of action and reaction, produced by desire of getting the results of actions in return. That is the real form of indifference (*anāsakti*, or *desirelessness*).

One who is steady and firm in devotion to action, is called a Karma Yogi. One who firmly sticks to the path of devotion or path of work, renouncing the results of actions, obtains peace, born out of that devotion and that peace is perpetual, but that peace does not come until true knowledge is gained.

These desireless works, peace, freedom, tranquility, and

highest wisdom, come simultaneously. Peace here means eternal peace, and freedom means eternal freedom, undisturbed by anything of the world, and absolute wisdom will enable us to see the Reality, just as we see the external objects with our senses. In that ideal state of freedom, even when your senses are working, you will not see the objects of senses, but they will appear to you like paintings on the canvas. Then you will see the infinite background, and all these names and forms will vanish. When your eyes see colours and beauty of anything, you see only beauty of the infinite Being which may be called the God vision. That is not imagination, but you actually see it and realize it. And one who sees it, is not an ordinary man of the world, and one who does not see it, is a miserable unfortunate creature. He is an unhappy mortal and will come back again and again until his spiritual eyes open and he sees the Reality.

That God-vision is the ideal. It ought to be the ideal of every soul. That comes in time by itself, no one can force it. When the heart is purified and has risen automatically above all these earthly attractions and when you have realized the transitoriness of all phenomenal conditions, then your soul is ready. At that time the soul tries to remain in silence, and in that silence the Divine Being reveals Himself to the soul.

Nothing can bring that revelation ; no argument or discussion will produce it, and it does not come as the result of action. If it comes as the result of action, it would have been relative as the result of an ordinary action and would not be eternal, unchangeable, and absolute. One whose mind is not fixed in that way, does not see the Absolute. One who has not attained to that state of renunciation of the results of action, but on the contrary, performs works through impulse and desire, seeking the results, falls into the bondage, produced by the law of action and reaction. So as long as you have a desire for any particular result, the desire will bind you and keep you on that plane until that desire is fulfilled, and if you do not have other desires, you are perfectly free.

Ordinary persons of the world, working for results, should strive with all their heart to offer these results to God. You cannot accomplish this right away, until you have got to that state. Therefore offer the results of your actions of body, senses,

and mind to God, and feel that you are working for God, even if it is worse than anything. If you are telling a lie, say that you are doing it for God, and that attitude will bring you out of that lie. You will not be able to do any sinful act, if you are doing it for God. Try to think that the most sinful act that you can commit, you are going to do it for God. All the temples or churches may go against you, but you must know that they know only one path, and that too they do not know well. They have heard of it, but never practised it. But you go and practise it. Take all thoughts, good and evil, which come to your mind, and send them to God, and instantly you will be a different being. Even the wicked thoughts will be transformed into divine thoughts, and they will be no longer wicked. But if you hold them and think that everything is for you, and everything you do, is for yourself, it is sinful, no matter how good you may feel it.

Sin is a relative term. A person may be sinful or less sinful. Everything that proceeds from selfishness and ignorance of truth or ignorance of God, is sinful. It is relative and phenomenal. It is done in the state of ignorance or self-delusion, and therefore, it is sinful. All philanthropic work may be extolled to the skies, but a wise man should see it as sinful and as *maya*. He should classify it under the same heading. Now what power have you to do good to the world? You cannot lift anything without the help of Divine Will, and you have not audacity to say you are going crazy to do good to the world. I have seen lots of people who are ready to do good to the world, but they are gone insane and are fit for a lunatic asylum. A great soul is divine. He never thinks for a moment he is going to do good to the world. He helps mankind, but never thinks for a moment that he is helping any one, on the contrary, he feels that the Divine will is doing everything. An atom cannot do good to the world ; what power has it?

A philanthropist came to my Master once. He was very anxious to do good to the world. He was very wealthy and lived in Calcutta. He started hospitals and schools and colleges there, and he came to my Master, Sri Ramakrishna. He said that he was crazy to do good to the world. In India, in the rainy season, in the Ganges, the young ones of the crab are so numerous that if you hold a handful of water, you will find

millions of these crabs, and Sri Ramakrishna gave that illustration: "Have you seen the young ones of the crab during the rainy season? Do you know who is taking care of them? You say you are doing good to the world, but can you do good to them? What good can you do to the world? Poor deluded soul, you are thinking you are doing good to the world, but God has given the charge of the world to you, and then He is taking rest".

He is a true doer of good to the world, who never thinks that he is doing good to the world. A true doer harmonizes his will with the infinite Will and makes himself an instrument in the hand of the almighty Will, killing his own selfish desires, egotism, pride, vanity, etc. He is moved by the wind of the almighty Will, just as dead leaf, fallen from a tree, is moved from place to place by the wind that blows.

So "having renounced all the actions of body, senses, and mind, and having given up all ideas of duty to the Self, the controlled and embodied being rests at ease in the city of nine gates, neither acting nor causing any one to act".¹³ Here we get an idea how the Jnani lives and thinks. He gives up all duties, but does not give them up consciously. All his duties drop off. He does neither perform any duties for ambition, nor for earthly prosperity and future happiness like going to heaven. There are many philanthropic works, but he does not care to go to heaven for enjoying celestial happiness, because he considers them to be unimportant and transitory, even if he lives for a cycle in prosperity and happiness. That idea would not attract his soul even if he becomes like the creator of the universe. In India, the idea is that the individual soul can be the creator of a new and limited cycle, or a part of the divine realm by good works, but that would not attract him. He does not perform any work in the ordinary sense. He does not take care of his body for comfort or temporary pleasure. Being self-controlled, he is no longer a man in the popular sense, but an embodied Spirit. The soul that is working through the physical form, manufactured by the soul itself, rests at ease in the city of nine gates (*'nava-dvāre pure'*).

What is the city of nine gates? This body is the city.

¹³ Vide the *Gita*, V. 13.

Seven gates are in head and they are two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and one mouth. In the city of nine gates, he rests at ease without identifying himself with the city, just as one would live in the city without thinking of himself as one with it. Ordinary people think of themselves as one with the body, but one who has realized the *Atman*, thinks of himself as one separate from the body. The body is like the house and the soul is the master of it, the servants are the senses, and the intellect is the chief attendant, etc. Although this body moves, he does not think that he is moving. I may come here, or go to California, or travel all over the world, but I do not move at the same time. Ordinary people cannot realize that they are immovable although their body is moving everywhere. When you hold a vessel in your hand and take it to any part of the city, the space in the jar appears to be moving, but it is not moving. Does the space move? No. You are like space, and your true Self is immovable. The *Atman* which is divine, is not moving, because it is beyond all limitations. Consequently, a person may perform all actions apparently, but within himself he knows that he cannot perform anything. Even he cannot make any one do anything for him, because he sees himself in everyone and everywhere. Thus he lives in the world and enjoys eternal peace in this life. Such one has attained to freedom, and is emancipated.

The Jnani lives in this way. If the whole world vanishes, or is destroyed, or is ruined by an earthquake, or his body may be cut to pieces, still his mind is not disturbed. He never loses that thought of his true Self for a moment. He rises above time and space which are the categories of nescience or *maya*. This ideal is now preached to the Western people, but it is the oldest of the old in India. See what a difference between the Western and the Eastern nations—between the West and the nation of the Hindus. The difference is in the atmosphere. The Hindus feed their souls with these thoughts.

As we the individual souls are living on this plane of activity rushing and dragging ourselves to all kinds of works, we are miserable and are fighting for the thing that will not make us happy. But, if in the midst of this bustle and rush you can hold yourself for a second on that plane, thinking of yourself

as a Spirit, as I ask you to do in the morning and evening during meditation, you will feel that your life has a meaning ; and you will begin to feel that there is such thing as the Soul and the Divinity, and that Divinity is not far from your true Self, but He is in you. Then you will be able to understand that we live and move and have our being in the Brahman, the Supreme Spirit. That is the true Vedantic ideal.

CHAPTER XX

GOD IS IMPARTIAL AND IS LIKE A WITNESS

The popular belief in the Western countries and also amongst the followers of dualistic religions is that God creates the souls of the individuals and makes them virtuous or sinful i.e. some created to be virtuous and others to work sinfully. We find this idea very common amongst the Christians and also amongst the Mohammedans and the Zoroastrians. In fact, those who believe in dualistic religions, believe this that God creates our destiny and we suffer or enjoy because God has so ordained ; we are predestined by God even before our birth as to whether we shall be virtuous or sinful and what way we shall live. But the Vedantic conception is different from this. Vedanta does not teach that God makes one virtuous or sinful, and as an exponent of the Vedanta philosophy, Sri Krishna advocates these ideas (these ideas are as early as 1400 years before the birth of Christ).

In reference to this idea, we find in the fourteenth verse of the fifth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*: "The Lord of the universe does not create the agency, nor the acts, nor the attainment of the fruit of actions, but it is the nature of the being that acts".¹ This nature (*prakriti* or *svabhava*) forces us to perform all deeds, and become virtuous or sinful according to the tendencies of the individuals ; and when these deeds are performed by the law of cause and sequence, which is called the law of causation, the results come to us according to the nature of our deeds. God is neither responsible for our virtuous deeds, nor for the sinful acts, but we ourselves are responsible for all the works. Really when our knowledge (*jnana*) is covered with the veil of ignorance (*ajnana*), i.e. when we are deluded, then we think ourselves as the agent of our actions and for that wrong knowledge, we either enjoy (for good results) or suffer

¹ न कर्तृत्वं न कर्मणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।

न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥५१४

(for bad result).² And when we suffer, we ignorantly lay blame upon God, who is not really responsible for our good or bad results, or for actions and reactions. Now if God made one virtuous and another sinful, the charge of partiality would be upon God. But God is not at all one-sided and partial. He is like the light of the lamp, which is impartially thrown towards the virtuous and the sinners. God is like the sun which shines equally upon the heads of the virtuous and the sinners. Sri Ramakrishna gave an example of a lamp that gives light to him who forges a deed or document and equally to him who reads the *Bhagavatam*. In the *Upanishad*, God has been called as a witness (*saksi*) who exerts no power or agency, but impartially witness everything, worst or best. Therefore, God never creates but projects everything, sentient and insentient, from within, and all beings enjoy or suffer according to the results of their actions they perform. Therefore why should God make one virtuous and another sinful, and be miserable? These questions will never be answered by those who believe that God creates destiny of the human beings. This question has risen in all the thoughtful minds of the Christians of all times, but it has neither been answered, nor been solved. Theologians have tried to solve this most difficult problem by giving some answers, but those answers are not based upon logic and reason. But when we take the whole responsibility upon our own shoulders, there is one great advantage and that is that we can undo what we are now doing and also all the suffering and misery and sorrow that we go through in this phenomenal life. If we are responsible for all good results that we obtain through our works, we can also undo all the wicked thoughts and the cause of wicked deeds, and attract the good causes which produce good and happiness. We can mould our own character and create our own destiny which makes us free individuals, and that is a great advantage we get through the help of Vedanta.

The word nature does not clearly explain what is meant by the Sanskrit word *svabhava*, but it means that power which makes us forget ourselves as souls and which forces us to identi-

² नादत्ते कस्यचित् पार्षं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः।

अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥५१५॥

fy ourselves with gross matter i.e with material form and body, and makes us think we are children of mortals.³ There is a power which keeps us on this human plane and makes us unhappy and miserable, makes us absolutely forget our true Self, and makes us forget our true relation to God. If this power were not there, why should we search after God? Those who wake up from this sleep of ignorance and begin to look around, find the true relation that exists between the soul and God, and, until that relation has been established, one cannot be happy. We wish to be happy and are longing for happiness, but how that happiness will come we do not know. It will come when we know ourselves, not as human beings, but as children of the Almighty Spirit, and when we know that we are, in reality, one with the Universal Spirit, then we transcend the reign of relativity.

God is all-pervading, and boundless, and lives in our souls. He is, in fact, the Soul of our souls, but we do not know Him. Why do we not know Him, if He is so near to us, if He is nearer even than our thoughts and ideas, and if He is like the essence of our being and one with our individuality? What is that something which prevents us from knowing that universal and all-embracing Truth? This has been a problem to all the philosophers and spiritual thinkers of all ages to solve.

The power of *svabhava* is universal, and you cannot say that power does not exist in some and exists in others. There are some who have attained to that enlightenment by conquering that power of illusion, or by getting out of the sleep of ignorance, which the majority of people do not realize.

Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest Incarnation in the nineteenth century, used to say that God is everywhere and is in all human beings, but all human beings are not in God, therefore they suffer. The meaning is very deep. We are not in God, but God is in us, and how is this? Of course, we hear that we live and move and have our beings in God, but we do not know it. So long as we do not know it, we are not living in God on the

³ * * स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते १५१४

Madhusudana Sarasvati said: "अत्रापि 'शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते' * *। इति तत्राह स्वभावस्तु अज्ञानात्मिका दैवी माया प्रकृतिः प्रवर्तते।"

conscious plane. When we know it, then we are in God ; then our misery, suffering, and sorrow vanish, and perfect peace and happiness rise in our souls. The all-pervading One does not approve any good or evil, done by the human beings. Our vision is covered over by ignorance or nescience, therefore, we are deluded, as if we have covered our own eyes with a thick veil and have made ourselves blind. We do not see things as they are in reality. We cannot see God, as long as that veil is over our eyes. When that veil becomes thin, we see God, i.e. we realize the divine presence of God everywhere. If there be a veil or a handkerchief folded into eight folds before my eyes, I would not be able to see. Gradually when it would be thin like air that veil would not obstruct the view. The veil of the wise ones has become very thin and they become so thin that it does not obstruct the sight and, therefore, they can see the Divinity everywhere. But ordinary persons cannot see, because their veil of ignorance is very thick.

Now what do you mean by ignorance? Ignorance is not an absolute nothingness. It is not a void or absolute negation, but has some existence. *Maya* which creates the phenomena, has two powers, or two aspects. One is to cover the intelligent source of consciousness and the other makes it appear to ordinary mortals or individual souls as if it is dark, just as a cloud appears to us. The cloud has two powers. When the cloud covers the sun, it has the power of covering the sun (although the cloud is not large enough to cover the sun, as the sun is much larger than the cloud which is covering it, but it covers our sight). It has the creative power to produce the rain or darkness. So when the veil of ignorance is between the spiritual eye of the individual ego and that of the Divine Spirit, it has two powers. One is that which covers the Universal Spirit, or the source of our being and the other makes us identify ourselves with the material forms. Then we think that we are one with the body, as we were born with the body. We do all kinds of things such as sitting, going somewhere, producing this or that. All these powers come with the body. So those two powers i.e. the power of ignorance and the creative power proceed from the one source of force which is called in Sanskrit *maya*.

Maya has two powers, the power of covering the universal Spirit and the power of producing all the phenomenal change

i.e. *avarana-sakti* and *vikshepa-sakti*. Powers are known and described as the process of evolution. So, cause of our delusion which we have at present, is *maya*. This is a kind of delusion. We all individuals are self-deluded. If you ask, why are we self-deluded, then I will say that it is because of those powers of *maya* or ignorance. But this is not the same as the Divine Spirit. From what part of the world does it come out? Nobody can trace it. But it does come out from different parts and gathers and covers the eyesight and brings ruin.

The power of *maya* proceeds from that all-pervading substance which is conceived as the ground,⁴ and produces a veil over the eyes of the individuals and makes them think differently. At present we cannot think that we are the sons of God and we are the immortals. But we shall be able to see God or the Truth when the cloud of ignorance will pass away, and the object and effort of Vedanta are to make that cloud or veil thinner and thinner, till we are able to see and appreciate the Reality. All these precepts and practices are aids to living a virtuous life. They help us in making that veil thinner, and, therefore, we must follow those precepts and practices.

Even the religions of the dualists produce the same results, though they do not explain it scientifically, nor philosophically that there is a veil of ignorance which has covered our eyes. But all the same they cannot deny it. They do not object to our saying that we are self-deluded. They persist in tracing the cause to God, or to individual souls, but they actually fail to see where to find it. But the fact cannot be denied that we have hypnotised ourselves, and, therefore, we are thinking of ourselves as mortals. So we must learn how to de-hypnotize ourselves so that we can come to the realization of our true Self. Then we will not be disturbed or be subject to pain or misery or diseases. Disease cannot affect the true nature of the soul, and the true nature or unchangeable being is called the *Atman*.

We will have to destroy this darkness of ignorance by bringing the light of immediate self-knowledge. First of all,

⁴ The Brahman is conceived as the base or substratum (*adhisthana*) of *maya* or *ajnana* for the manifestation of the world-appearance, but, in truth, the Brahman i.e. indeterminate Brahman never forms the cause or ground of the world, as it transcends *maya* or *ajnana* for all the time.

we will know by discrimination, who we are and what we are, etc. and through the help of that knowledge of the Self or discrimination, we will begin to see that. In fact, we are not one with the body. The bodies are like the instruments through which the souls are manifesting their powers, and therefore, the souls are separate from the material bodies. We come to know this, when the veil of ignorance has become very thin, or the darkness of ignorance has been dispersed by the light of self-knowledge. So when the self-knowledge has destroyed this darkness of ignorance, then the divine knowledge comes. Divine knowledge is like the light of the self-effulgent sun. It is not relative ; it is not dependent upon anything ; it cannot be reproduced by any intellectual power, or by reading of books, or through any work, but it must produce itself, and is self-manifesting and self-evident. In other words, the means of its advent are to be found in that soul where self-knowledge has begun to manifest. That is, when that self-effulgent light of the Supreme Spirit begins to shine in the soul we see the Divinity everywhere. Then we realize that all living creatures are but so many manifestations of the one Supreme Spirit, the Brahman. From the minutest particle of living matter to the highest God, all individual souls are but the expressions of that one Universal Being. Then we rise above all desires, our selfishness drops off like a scale from the eye, and gradually we conquer the cycles of birth and death and everything of the phenomenal world. Birth and death would not affect that soul, as they are related to material body. But the knowledge of that Self is to be attained through practice of discrimination, right reasoning; and analysis of the true Self. The knowledge of the Self is the prime aim of the human life.

The *Upanishad* says that he who will attain to that knowledge of the Self, will be able to destroy the darkness of ignorance. Again those who have become disgusted and dissatisfied with the pleasures of works, and do not find pleasure in this world after having been tired of all different things, do not care for any thing of the world. But those whose minds are still attached to the things of the world, will not find it. They will live in the darkness of ignorance until they get blow after blow and at last come to their senses. But it is not for all. If it were for all human beings, they would

have been perfect by this time. Religion has been preached from pre-historic times, but only a few obtain knowledge. The rest will have to go through the cycles of birth and rebirth, until they come to that great awakening. They will have to feel that nothing can please their souls, no matter how great it is. If all the pleasures of the millionaire or multimillionaire be piled up in a heap and if he be allowed to enjoy any portion of it with absolute freedom, if even under these circumstances, he does not care for these pleasures, and if he turns his back on it disregarding all the prospects of the pleasures and happiness and looking upon it as a source of bondage and suffering, then that soul is ready to reach God and will realize the Brahman, the real essence of God.

God will not come to the soul which is attached to the things of the world,⁵ because things of the world are in the darkness of ignorance, and where there is that darkness, the divine light does not manifest. Therefore, worldly men and women would have to go through many hard experiences before that awakening comes and when there will be a real longing for spiritual knowledge or awakening of knowledge of the Truth, then will come the self-knowledge (*atmajnana* or *brahmajnana*).

If the devoted heart and soul be fixed on that one eternal unchangeable and everlasting Truth, which is beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, beyond the reach of our mind and senses and which cannot be compared to sense pleasures, and cannot be obtained by emotions and feelings, then the mind will not be moved from that central point, but will remain fixed upon it. If the whole world be offered in exchange for that realization, even then it will not be able to shake the mind of the devotee, and nothing of the world will please him and make him happy. Then his whole soul will be longing for that highest peace which is unchangeable. When that state comes, no one can prevent him to reach the supreme goal. Such awakened souls go beyond the reach of death and never return again. Then they become immortal and realize their immortal nature and their sins are shaken off by means of highest wisdom. Then they become free from all sins. That intense

⁵ It means that God the Absolute or the Brahman will not be realized by the soul (*jivatman*), who is deluded by the worldly things.

longing for the supreme realization or divine light will bring the light nearer and the light will destroy the darkness of ignorance which has made them entangled in the chain of ego-centric idea or selfishness. Consequently, the cause of selfishness being destroyed, everything that proceeds from selfishness, will also be destroyed. That is the lower self or selfishness, and the cause of that selfishness is ignorance of our true nature or of the truth that we are the immortal Spirit. The moment we know that we are immortal, that very moment we become one with the Supreme Soul. Then we realize our true Self and rise above all sins, selfishness, suffering, sorrow, etc. Then we do not claim anything as ours and do not say this is mine and that is yours. These ideas of I, me and mine proceed from ignorance. This sense of I, me, mine exists as long as we are identifying ourselves with the gross material body and with the phenomenal things. These phenomenal things are necessary for earthly life, but we must love that Supreme Being, or the highest Truth, with our whole heart. We must be devoted to that. We must regard Truth as the supreme goal, and then we will reach immortality, will go beyond birth and death and beyond the mystery of reincarnation, and our sins will be washed off. We may believe in Christ, or in any being, but until that divine knowledge comes, our sins will not be washed off.

There are thousands and millions who believe in Christ, but there are very few whose sins have been washed off, because sin can be washed off only when sins have vanished. You may call it by any name, but the fact is the same.

Having attained to that self-effulgent knowledge which makes one feel the Divinity everywhere, the wise one sees the same Spirit in a high caste Brahman who has wisdom and authority as well as in the lower animals, in a king, or in an elephant, or a sage, or a cat and also in the lowest caste or in a pariah who lives the simple life. The real knower of the absolute Truth sees the same Spirit, the all-pervading Being, in all diverse states and sees also the diversity, and through the diversity he realizes the unity, because their insight penetrates the surface of everything and every being and goes to the bottom.

A man may be endowed with high qualifications, or virtues, or learning, or sharp intellect, or other high qualities, and

another may not be so endowed, but the true nature, or the Self, or the Divine spark of each of them, is one and the same. The penetrating light of intelligence which proceeds from the true Self, is the same everywhere. It is the condition of the mind that makes one virtuous or sinful, and it is the condition of the mind that brings out all the qualifications, intellectual and mental, but the true Spirit, even in lower animals, is divine, otherwise how can God be all-pervading? God cannot be all-pervading, if he does not dwell in lower animals also. The first verse of the *Isha-Upanishad* says: '*Isha vasyamidam sarvam*', i.e. everything of the universe is pervaded by God.

As the result of this self-knowledge, one gets liberation or emancipation from ignorance, from the law of action and reaction, cause and sequence, etc., and, while living on this phenomenal plane, he sees and feels the Divinity everywhere. After death he becomes immortal and even in this life time he is immortal, as well as he feels one with the Divinity constantly.⁶ That feeling is never to be destroyed. He may live

⁶ While commenting on the fourth *sūtra* of the *Brahmasūtra*: "*tattu samanvayāt*" Sankara has described about the enlightened liberated state of a *Jivanmukta* i.e. of one who has attained to the Brahman-realization (*brahmānubhūti*) in one's life-time. Sankara and some other philosophers admit the state of a *Jivanmukta*, while Mandana Mishra, Sarvajnatma-Mahāmuni and others admit *Videhamukti* i.e. liberation after the dissolution of the material body, which is the product of nescience (*ajñana*). Regarding *jivanmukti*, Sankara says,

‘अशरीरं वाच सन्तं न प्रियाप्रिये स्मृतः’ (ऋग्वेद ८.१२.१) इति ।
 (पूर्वपक्ष) शरीरे पतितेऽशरीरत्वं स्यात्, न जीवत इति चेत् । (उत्तरपक्ष) न,
 सशरीरत्वस्य मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तत्वात् । न हि आत्मनः शरीरात्माभिमानलक्षणं
 मिथ्याज्ञानं मुक्त्यन्यतः सशरीरत्वं शक्यं कल्पयितुम् । नित्यमशरीरत्वमकर्मनिमित्तत्वा-
 दित्यवोचाम । * * तस्मान्मिथ्याप्रत्ययनिमित्तत्वात् सशरीरत्वस्य सिद्धं जीवतोऽपि
 विदुषोऽशरीरत्वम् । * * ‘स चक्षुरचक्षुरिव सकर्णोऽकर्ण इव सप्राणोऽप्राण इव’ इति
 च । स्मृतिरपि च—‘स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा’ (भगवद्गीता २.५४) इत्याद्या स्थित-
 प्रज्ञलक्षणान्याचक्षणा विदुषः सर्वप्रवृत्त्यसंबन्धं दर्शयति । तस्मान्नावागतब्रह्मात्मभावस्य
 यथापूर्वं संसारित्वम् । यस्य तु यथापूर्वं संसारित्वं नास्मावागतब्रह्मात्मभाव इत्यनवद्यम् ।”

in the material body which is the abode of misery, but his feeling of the Brahman is not destroyed. And it is a fact that once the Brahman-knowledge is attained, it shines all the time. On the contrary, the state of realization which ordinary people call the abode of nothingness and silence, is, in reality, the abode of eternal happiness and peace.

Now, if I have a child and am attached to that child, I suffer on account of death of that child. I suffer because I have this sense that I had this child and that child of mine has died. But when I know that I am the soul and cannot have any child with body-relation, and the child (i.e. the soul of the child), in reality, does not die, but is immortal, then why should I suffer on account of the change of the material body? That suffering would be terrible for an ordinary mortal who believes that he is the father of the child and the child belongs to him and has passed away. But if that mortal be a wise one, he would say, 'whose child is this?' He never could have any child, because the soul is the child of the Almighty Spirit. That realization is very rare. For this reason, Sri Krishna has said that a few among thousands of people try to know the *Atman*, and among thousands of seekers after knowledge, a few can really know the *Atman*.⁷ And it is a fact, that with the attainment of the *Atman* everything of this world is known and

From the *Bhāṣya* it is understood that one who attains the *brahma-vijnāna*, transcends the limitation of *māya* forever and ever, and then lives in this world of nescience not as an ordinary worldly man, but as an enlightened one who does everything in this world, but is not attached to anything. Sri Krishna has described this divine state of the *Jīvanmukta* in the *sloka*s II 55-58

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

Madhusudana Sarasvati has called this unattached liberated state as 'सराग-विषयनिवृत्तिः'. Then the world appears to a *Jīvanmukta* as a new one, covered with the presence of the all-consciousness Brahman

⁷ मनुष्यानां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद् यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्ततः ॥७३॥

nothing remains as unknown⁸ But ordinary people living in the world of nescience, cannot expect to get that Divine realization. But they must not throw their children out in the street and walk out of the house thinking they have become divine. On the contrary, they should take care of the child, but at the same time, if they realize that is the child of God, all the care and trouble which they take for their children, would be the service of the Almighty and this would be the means of the Spirit which is all-pervading and the Soul of our souls, is very difficult, but still we must struggle hard to attain what is most desirable and which is the prime aim of human life. If it were the easiest thing to attain, we would not care for it, but if it be the hardest, we should long for it. But Vedanta says that even in this life, we can conquer heaven, creation, and everything if our whole mind abides in the Eternity, the *Atman*

So we should remember that he who has seen the spiritual unity or oneness in all living creatures, has conquered heaven and all the phenomenal conditions. As long as there is duality, there are the individual egos who go to a realm where there are subtle bodies and enjoyment of pleasures. As long as there is enjoyment of pleasures having a form, so long all these things mean that heaven is in the realm of phenomena and relativity. But the realm of phenomena should be conquered by rising to the realm of the Absolute, or by realizing our true Self which is immortal and formless. And if our mind be fixed on that formless and immortal Being, who is above all phenomena and relativity, we reach the ultimate goal. After death, instead of coming down to the phenomenal plane, we go to that Supreme Being and be one with Him. Without any imperfection we see Brahman who manifests through the imperfect conditions of mind, intellect and body. The Brahman is perfect, only the manifestation is imperfect. But behind all this manifestation is the perfect Being and that is the un-

* (क) “एकस्मिन् विज्ञाने सर्वविज्ञानं भवति ।”

The Mundaka-Upanishad says:

(ख) “कस्मिन् नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति” (१।१।३)

and the *Chhandogya Up*, says:

“येन अश्रुतं श्रुतं भवति, अमृतं मृतं, अविज्ञातं विज्ञातम्”

६।१।३।

changeable Spirit and the Divine Being. By knowing that, we become one with It. There is no more going and coming (*utthāna* and *byutthāna*), and no more suffering and sorrow. Heaven and hell will disappear before the eyes of such a wise and self-realized one.

He who is steady in the knowledge of understanding the unity and reality of the universe and is undeluded, does not exert himself to obtain impermanent pleasant things, nor does he feel like going to any plane by getting pleasant things, because he has conquered pleasure and pain. Anything that creates a pleasure in the mind of an ordinary mortal, would not create that pleasure in the mind of the wise one. A wise man may express in the ordinary way his pleasure, but when an unpleasant thing comes, he is above pleasure and pain, absolutely unaffected by them.

So we must not consider this state as a state of indifference, which is wrongly or mistakenly known for unmindfulness or absence i.e. blankness of mind and attention, but it is, in reality, rising above the dual experiences, and through these dual experiences a wise man sees the unchangeable Reality. In an ordinary state of indifference, person does not see the Reality, or does not realize the true nature of the Self beyond all relativity, but a wise man, although showing his indifference to the dual experiences of pleasure and pain of earthly life, yet through them he sees the unchangeable One. Therefore, it is not the same state as the state of indifference, but there is a vast experience. You must not also mistake the state of indifference for Godliness, as a wise man never goes to be deluded again.

When you have once realized that eating something produces a certain taste and if you do not like it or care for it, you would never touch it again, but, on the contrary, if you care for it, you will long for it and have it over and over again. So, when once we have known and got deep impressions of those states and suffered from them, we do not care or seek for them and then we must seek for that which is higher and greater and better.

The knower of the Brahman rests always in the Brahman, either in this life or after death. After death it would not make any difference; the body may drop off, but he will remain in that self-conscious entity. If the body be cut into pieces,

he would not feel it. He would not feel unhappy or miserable on account of pain or sorrow or suffering, but he will be above and beyond all these dual conditions and experiences. Therefore, we should endeavour to attain to that supreme knowledge as quickly as possible. If we are ready for it, we will attain it quickly, and if we are not ready and still if we struggle a little, it will not do any harm, but it will awaken our souls and put us on the right path, so that we can begin again that honest struggle in our next incarnation. Then we will not have to start from the beginning again, but can go on starting from the point where we have stopped in this incarnation.

CHAPTER XXI

DESIRE BRINGS ATTACHMENT AND PAIN

Vedanta teaches that eternal peace and happiness come in the state of Godconsciousness (*brahmanubhuti*). Longing for perfect balance and peace, the sages and saints through ages renounced the world of desires, and they renounced everything of their life being absorbed in the highest consciousness of the Brahman. Really perfect peace, balance of the mind and happiness come after the realization of the Absolute, and they do not change in any time being everlasting and eternal. Some people may say from ignorance, 'we are naturally attached to the pleasures and enjoyments of life, and Godconsciousness is so far from us that it seems like something visionary or imaginary, and, therefore, how can we sacrifice the material pleasures and luxuries of life which are near at hand. Further which is not easily be conceived by thought and mind, that may not come to our reach, and so sacrifice for the unknown is unnecessary.' But this kind of thought has no value.

We know that the pleasures of life are attractive, because they have some charm. They have been tasted or enjoyed in the previous lives, or in many incarnations, and so we are born with such impressions (*samskaras*), habits and ideas, and so they naturally come to our mind and float in the vast sheet of the mind. We cannot, therefore, live without those experienced pleasures of earthly existence, and that is why we try to get them and enjoy them and we are repeatedly attached to them. And these are the words of the worldly-minded and self-deluded men. But those who have realized the transitory nature of the phenomenal things or objects and think with discrimination that the objects or things they have obtained in their life are non-eternal and do not amount to nothings, are ready to sacrifice them for the sake of gaining that which is eternal and for which all the sages and saints of the past ages and even the kings and princes, renounced their earthly pleasures, thrones and comforts of life, and the examples of them are not far from us. Gautama Buddha, Sankaracharya, Sri Chaitanya and others

are the bright examples of them. Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest Incarnation of this age, also lived the life of renunciation and spiritual *sadhana*, taking his divine consort by his side and thinking her and worshipping her as the living embodiment of the Divine Energy (*Mahasakti*) .

Therefore Sri Krishna has said in the twentyfirst verse of the fifth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*: "With his heart or mind unattached to ephemeral external contacts of senses he finds that real joy which lives in the soul, and with his soul fixed in union or tune with the infinite Brahman, the eternal Reality or Truth, he attains to peace everlasting".¹ So, in order to get that happiness which is the undying and eternal bliss (*anandam*), one must not have any attachment to the objects of senses. Bliss or *anandam* here signifies everlasting happiness, which has no break or end. It can be said to be the much higher state of the soul (*jivatman*). It is higher than anything that can be imagined or thought of. In order to attain to that blissful happiness, we will have to become unattached to all phenomenal pleasures and enjoyments that are born in contact of mind and senses. If we are unable to be detached from them, we must find out means by right discrimination and reasoning, whether they are worth-having or not. This kind of analysis or discrimination is necessary to understand or realize the difference between the real and the unreal.

It has already been said that real peace and happiness come with the attainment of Godconsciousness, and that peace and happiness do not depend on any external or internal conditions. The *Upanishad* says that they are no other than the unfoldment or manifestation of the serene bliss or embodiment of existence-intelligence-bliss (*sacchidananda*) that lie in the cave of the heart of all living beings, nay, that lie in all sentient and insentient objects of the world. Realization of God or the

वाङ्मयसर्वेष्वसत्कात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत् सुखम् ।

स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥५।२१

Sankara said:

“तस्माद्वाङ्मयविषयप्रीतेः क्षणिकाया इन्द्रियानि निवर्तयेदात्मन्यक्षयसुखार्थीत्यर्थः ।”

Brahman brings this happiness and blissful state in man, and they can be compared to no other things of the world.

It can be asked as to what happens to one who attains to Godconsciousness. Vedanta says that after the attainment of Godconsciousness or Brahman-knowledge, which is the prime aim of all living beings, mind remains peaceful and shining being undisturbed by the modifications like desires, anxieties, worries, etc. It is said: "Enjoyments and pleasures, which can be obtained through the contact of senses with external objects, or all the enjoyments and pleasures, which one can obtain, would not be like the one-sixteenth part of super-sensual divine happiness which comes during the attainment of Godconsciousness. Then thirst for worldly pleasures cease forever."² Thirst for anything is a kind of disease. Thirst is *trishna* or *kama* which is known as Mara that tried to enchant Gautama Buddha, when he sat for meditation for attaining Nirvana. Buddha conquered the Mara i.e. *trishna* or *tanha* or desires (*kama*) and attained Nirvana and cut asunder all the knots of nescience (*ajnana*). This thirst or *trishna* makes a man entangled in the trap of *maya* and makes him forget his prime aim, the attainment of Godconsciousness. In order to quench that thirst.

² यो हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एवते ।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥५॥२२

Regarding the word 'आद्यन्तवन्तः', Anandagiri said:

'आद्यन्तवत्त्वे मध्यक्षणवर्तित्वेन क्षणभङ्गु रत्वादुपेक्षणीयत्वं भोगानां ।'

Madhusudana Sarasvati explained this *sloka* (5.22) elaborately, and quoting Gaudapada, Patanjali and others, he said:

"तदुक्तं गौडपादाचार्यैः 'आदावन्ते च यत्रास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत् तथा' इति ।

* * तदुक्तं भगवता पतञ्जलिना—'परिणामतापसंस्कारदुःखैर्गुणवृत्तिविरोधाच्च दुःखमेव सर्वं विवेकिनः' (पातञ्जलदर्शन २।१५) इति । * * स्मृतिश्च—'न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति । इविषा कृष्णवर्त्मनो भूय एवाभिवर्द्धते ।' इत्यादिः । * * तथाचोक्तं योगमाध्यकारैः—'सर्वस्य द्वेषानुविद्धश्चेतनसाधनाधीनस्तापानुभवः' इति । * * सर्वेऽप्यविद्यात्मकत्वेन मिथ्याभुना रज्जुभुज्झाध्यासवत् मिथ्या (भूत-) त्वेऽपि दुःखयोनयः स्वप्नादिवत् दृष्टिपृष्ठिमात्रत्वेनाद्यन्तवन्तश्च त्रि 'बुधो'ऽधिष्ठान-साक्षात्कारेण निवृत्तभ्रमस्तेषु न रमते—मृगतृणिकास्वरूपज्ञानवानिव तत्रोदकार्थी न प्रवर्तते । * * ततः सर्वाणोन्द्रियाणि निवर्तयोदित्यर्थः ।'

people go round from place to place and from object to object seeking temporary pleasures and trying to be happy by possession of their desired objects. But we know the consequences of their struggles for getting the objects of pleasures or enjoyments, as in most of the cases they fail in their attempts, but yet they spend their whole life in seeking after pleasures.

Foolish people follow the path which has been adopted by majority of men who are ignorant and blind to the light of consciousness. Ignorant men and women of the delusive world run after the phantoms of impermanent pleasures. So first thing we would remember, is that all the pleasures that arise from the contact of senses, are transitory; they do not last long, they come and go and last for a few seconds, and in the end, there is a great deal of pain, suffering, remorse, and repentance. So the pleasures which are born of the contact of senses, are equal to disease and pain, as they are floating and not permanent. The wise men like Buddha and other Saviours are alert and very careful to the sense-pleasures. They do not rejoice in such pleasures which come and go and lead to disease and pain. Now, if you expect to have those passing shadows of pleasures and enjoyments, you will fail and will be disappointed. Do not expect them also in the life after death, as the pleasures, which are not eternal and divine, will deceive you and take you to the abode of infinite pain and suffering. Cultivate the powers of discrimination and reasoning, and beyond the mistaken knowledge, try to see the light of the consciousness and lead your life in the right path. God has given you best intellect, exercise it, and listen to the call of intuition, and try to cut asunder the chain of nescience or *maya*, which has deluded you and made you forget your real existence and pristine glory, and get into the kingdom of God and enjoy there real and eternal happiness.

Vedanta says that those whose spiritual eyes are open to the eternal Truth, are never satisfied with the changeable phenomenal pleasures and comforts. They have realized the temporal nature of the phenomenal pleasures and so they rise above them and struggle for drinking the nectar of celestial bliss and pleasure. So one thing we must remember that if we wish to attain to highest and eternal happiness or bliss, we should not be attracted by the delusive pleasures of the

phenomenal world; on the contrary, we should find fault with them, and go beyond them for finding or attaining eternal peace. Through discrimination and by exercising proper reason, we shall be able to go beyond the worldly pleasures, realizing that they are uselessly keeping us down on the earth plane and making us unhappy. We should remember that love and attraction for worldly pleasures are not lasting, and they bring pain and suffering as consequences in the end, and remembrance and reasoning are the only way by which we can cut off the attachment to those things which we desire and love.

The phenomenal pleasures and enjoyments may be compared to the infinitesimal particles of the highest bliss which one obtains in the Godconscious state. Here it may be asked as to whether the attainment of Godconsciousness is a state at all? To this it can be said that Vedanta has divided state or level of highest consciousness into four: transcending fourth or *Turiya*, *Isvara*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Virata*, and they are realized in different grades. Now Advaita Vedanta does not consider the fourth assuming state as a state at all, as it is a transcending one, devoid of a list tint of nescience (*ajnana* or *maya*), and so from the standpoint of the world-process, which is the product of nescience or *maya*, *Isvara*, the third principle, is regarded as the highest one, or the most highest state. Now the phenomenal pleasures and enjoyments are like the atoms and the celestial bliss, which comes in the attainment of Godconsciousness, is like a huge mountain. There is no space between the parts, and it is the solid mass of happiness. How can one give a description of that supreme happiness which one enjoys in the realization of Godconsciousness? There is nothing in the phenomenal world which can be compared to that (happiness). The highest pleasure which you can think of, if you increase it millions and millions of times, that will be something like the bliss, which you can obtain in Godconsciousness.

But, on the contrary, as long as you are seeking the pleasures and enjoyments of the external world, you are sowing the seed of pain and suffering unconsciously and unknowingly. Think all the enjoyments you have had in your life. How many times you have been happy on account of these particles of pleasures which you have received during your life-time? For a grain of pleasures, as small as a mustard-seed, one carries a mountain of

pain on his shoulders. This is what we call the world. But if that grain of happiness would be taken out of the world, this world would be dead. Therefore it is said in the Vedas that all animals, including human beings, enjoy only a particle of that infinite bliss which is the same as the Brahman. And that infinitesimal particle has kept the world going, otherwise this world would not move, and this is the whole secret of it. They come and go; they have a beginning, and they have an end. All bliss, pleasures, and enjoyments which come to us through the contact of senses, are transitory, because they come and go, and they pass like the moving pictures, and you cannot keep them for any length of time, even if you try.

So the wise men reason in this way: "When the pleasures do not exist before the time of enjoyment, and when they do not last after the enjoyment is over, they are transitory and in the middle when we are enjoying, even then it seems to be like a dream, it does not exist." That is, a wise man thinks that the pleasures which the worldly-minded people long for, are like dreams, and so they vanish and are evanescent. For a short time they come and when they go, no one can tell where it goes and where it is vanished. Do you know where it goes? Do you know where it comes from? It suddenly appears like a cloud in the blue sky and then it produces pain, and after that, it vanishes. Where does it come from or go? Nobody can tell that. So the pleasures and enjoyments which we get on this earth are like clouds in the sky, and disappear after a short time. Therefore, a wise man does not rejoice in them.

Furthermore, in this verse you will notice that the causes of pain are referred to. Those who have read the *Patanjala-darshana*, will get in the second chapter five kinds of pain which come in our search after worldly pleasures, and those five pains (*kleshas*) are: *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesha*, and *abhinivesha* (nescience, egoism, attachment, aversion and love of life). These pains or afflictions have separately been defined and discussed by Vyasa, Vachaspati Mishra and others. These pains or afflictions may be called as the five forms of unreal cognition (*viparyaya*). (a) Regarding nescience (*avidya*) Patanjali has said: (a) 'अनित्याद्युचिदुःखानात्मसु नित्यद्युचिदुःखात्मख्यातिरविद्या' * * (2.5) i.e., 'nescience is the taking of the non-eternal, the impure, the painful and the not-self to be the unreal, the pure, the pleasurable

and the self'. (b) 'दृग्दर्शनशक्तयोरेकात्मतेवास्मिता' (2.6) i.e. 'egoism is the appearance of identity in the natures of the subjective power of consciousness and the instrumental power of seeing'. The self is the subjective power of consciousness and the will-to-know is the instrumental power of seeing. While appearance of these two powers seem identical, pain or application like egoism evolve. (c) 'सुखानुशायी रागः' (2.7) i.e. 'attachment is the sequential attraction to pleasure'. That is, desire to possess, the thirst for and the hankering after worldly pleasure or the means thereof, proceed by a remembrance of the pleasure in one who has enjoyed it, is attachment (*raga*), says Vyasa. (d) 'दुःखानुशायी द्वेषः' (2.8) i.e. 'aversion is the sequential repulsion from pain'. (e) 'स्वरसवाही विदुषोऽपि तथाहृदोऽभिनिवेशः' (2.9) i.e. 'flowing on by its own potency, established all the same even in the wise, is love of life'.³ Now a wise man is he who has removed false or wrong knowledge (*bhrama*) from his mind after realizing the basic supreme knowledge of the Brahman (*adhis-thana-sakshatkarena*), and for this realization he removes his desires and attachments for pleasures and worldly enjoyments.

Now the wise men analyse the pleasures and enjoyments, and after analysing these conditions, they find fault with them. In what way do they commit fault? They find that the result is painful. Here a very good and clear analysis is given by the commentator. Just as we find amongst ourselves that ordinary people who are not discriminative, can find no fault with earthly pleasures and enjoyments, but only those who have eyes of discrimination open, can see the faults. First of all, you must analyse the point in this way. That if you have a desire for something, you can enjoy that thing, and not otherwise. If you have thirst for water, you enjoy drinking the water. If you have no thirst, you cannot enjoy it, even when the glass of water is held before your mouth. The cause of desire for pleasure and enjoyment is in us and that is the root which leads us to enjoyment. If the desire be stronger than you, enjoy it more, because the satisfaction of desire is just that is needed but if there were no desire, satisfaction is unnecessary. So all

³ While commenting on the *sloka* V. 22 of the *Gita*, Madhusudana Sarasvati elaborately discussed about these five pains or afflictions and the means of their removal.

people who find pleasure in the world, must have in the beginning the extreme longing for pleasures.

That desire (*kama* or *vasana*), which would lead us to come in contact with the objects of this world, turns into the form of pleasant feeling at the time of satisfaction. What is the nature of that feeling? Desire means a kind of longing. The fire is burning, and if you pour some oil into it, or pour something which will try to quench that fire, it will burn the more. The desire can be compared to a flame which burns and stirs up the whole inner nature, and it longs for something, produces an impulse and, by getting the object of desire we feel happy. The same desire takes the form of pleasure, or pleasant feeling, or satisfaction, when we get the object of desire, but when we do not get the object of desire, if some thing stands between, we feel unhappy, because the fire is there burning inside and the object of desire cannot be obtained either, and that makes you miserable. It is the most miserable condition of our earthly life. If you are longing for something and cannot get it, no one can make you happy.

But when you try to get or enjoy the object of desire, even then do you think that the fire of desire will be quenched forever? No, it will be just like the fire. As fire is never quenched by pouring butter into it, it will rather flare up and burn with greater force, so the objects of desire may be poured on the fire of desire or longing, but by that the desire will never be quenched, it will go on increasing. So you can see the life of an ordinary person, how miserable it becomes in the end. If he has an attachment to any kind of pleasure, he cannot live without it. He must have it even when he goes to the grave, and even after death he will continue to long for that object. So by enjoying, we increase the fire of desire, and our memory becomes so strong that it is impossible to eradicate it. We find that all these things proceed from enjoyment, but ordinary people do not analyse things in this way. A wise man does, and therefore, he does not care for it. If anything interferes at the time of enjoyment, then there is pain. So we see how painful it is.

In the first place, when you had the desire, it was not a pleasant thing, because until it was satisfied, you could not be happy. So that was painful. At the time of enjoyment if

there be something which turns hostile to our mind, or interferes with us in any shape or manner, then there is pain or suffering, and, in the end also, it is suffering, because it increases the desire. More desire we must have then ; we must have it over again, and, therefore, it is painful, and the memory is also painful. All *samskaras* or impressions are nothing but the reproduction of them we get.

In enjoying, the mind gets the impression. It is filled with that particular feeling, and the impression of that feeling lasts for a long time and, even if we try to remove that impression, we find it extremely difficult, and therefore, that impression is painful. And that impression leads to another birth, if it cannot be annihilated by bringing the higher feelings of the heart, or through the fire of knowledge. If our mental conditions cannot be burned by that fire of knowledge, then we have sown the seed of our future birth, pain, and suffering. And these fires have different degrees of intensity of desire. One may have stronger desire and impression, another may have weaker ones, but all these can be removed by one thing. These ties which hold the world in bondage, can be cut off by the sword of discrimination. What is the body? The body is nothing but flesh and blood. In that way, if we analyse the physical and psychological conditions, we find there is nothing of substance in it. We shall be able to find its faults at every stage. A wise man never throws away that sword of discrimination, but always carries it with him wherever he goes ; and whatever anything comes in his presence, he uses that sword of discrimination and, therefore, he is never attached to anything.

By the sword of discrimination he cuts away all the ties of attachment. Ordinary people who are attached to the world, in the first place, are self-deluded, because they do not know what they are doing, or why they are slaves to this body and to physical and mental conditions and also to passions. They cannot believe that they are driven forcibly from within toward the objects of desire. They cannot resist the force. It is extremely powerful. It covers their intellect, makes them forget their real Self and real nature, and the result is self-delusion. And this is considered to be one of the states which are included in the term, hell.

The first is self-delusion ; the second is the desire to possess

all the pleasant things and feelings which cannot come and which we cannot have. This is the second state of self-delusion and is worse. The third is: "I must not have any pain, I must have all the pleasures of life, let me enjoy everything". That is another state of hell. The fourth is that which is possessed, I must not lose, for instance, this body. This body I have received and also the sense-powers. I have got all these material conditions and I must not lose them. Clinging to all these conditions is the fourth state. What can be worse? These four can never be satisfied, but still there is longing of the individual soul for them. The soul cannot rest contented by leaving these conditions of self-delusion.

But the wise man considered all these sense-enjoyments as impossibilities and, therefore, he never allows himself to be self-deluded. But, on the contrary, he is always watchful. He guards against all the dangers and mistakes that may lead to self-delusion, and he tries to keep himself wide-awake, having the spiritual eyes open. The wide open eyes make him see and realize the eternal unchangeable Truth. Such wise men are never deluded, but, on the contrary, they direct their life toward the highest goal, and reach happiness here and hereafter. In this life, before a person is separated from his body, if he can resist the impulses, born of desire and anger and lust, that man is wakeful and is happy. He is a Yogi who can control his mind from anger and all desires. He guides his mind above all desires and anger.

These two, anger and desire, are the greatest enemies in the path of spiritual progress. Desires are of various kinds. The stronger two of these are lust and anger. Desire or lust is the worst disease, and has been described by the commentators as the longing of the inner nature for things that are pleasant, of which we have heard, of which we have seen, and of which we remember. That is thirst for things which we have enjoyed, or which we have seen or heard. Anger comes when that desire is left unfulfilled by having some obstacles. The sense conditions and physical changes can come through desire and anger, and change the expression of eyes. They will be red if a person is angry, and if anger is very strong the most intimate friend would appear as an enemy, and the greatest enemy would appear as a friend, because you know, when a person is angry,

he does not know what he is doing. He may kill his father or mother or dearest friend or relative. How many people have committed crimes of various kinds! A father may kill his only son. Many persons have been driven to insanity through anger, or from unsatisfied desire. So, he who can control it in this life before the separation of the body from the soul, is a Yogi. He is happy in this life. So what should we do? Whether we practise exercises or not, we should try to have this anger under our control. Be not a slave to these things like lust and anger. Never be angry with a person, no matter what he says or what he does. Never have such desires as would lead to pain or misery, but, on the contrary, should exercise discrimination, reason, and analysis, and find fault with the things which you love most dearly, because that love is nothing but a kind of morbid attachment. So it is not real love. We should use some other expression. Real love is God. It is divine, and it cannot be anything else.

Ordinary man loves like an animal. Just as an animal eats, drinks and is a slave of desires, so an ordinary man or woman of the world whose spiritual eyes are not open, lives on the animal plane. But he who can live in this world, being dead to all these passions, desires, anger, jealousy, and other feelings, which are found in ordinary mortals. Like a dead body, he has attained to that peace and happiness which belong to God.

God has no passion. He cannot have anger or desire for ordinary things. He has no wants. He has got everything, and if we wish to be godly, we must do this. First we try to have all these desires fulfilled. But practically we cannot fulfil all desires. Therefore, big and little desires we must drive out by discrimination. If we have a desire to walk somewhere, or to make a change, or to have some clothes, these ordinary desires can be fulfilled, but the big desires should be driven out of the mind by finding fault with them and by discrimination. This we must do, if we wish to attain to that eternal happiness. If we do not wish to attain to that eternal happiness, we will entangle ourselves in the attachments. But it is not desirable for us. We must go beyond all pains and troubles by realizing the *Atman*.

"He who is joyous within, who is blessed within, who is luminous within, attains to the Brahman and perfect bliss.

Being one with the Brahman, he becomes the Brahman".⁴ Being joyous within, even when the objects of desires are not present and being happy and contented and blessed within, he does not feel in any way anxious or worried about the things which he does not possess. He feels peaceful and his enjoyment or pleasure does not depend upon external conditions or objects. But his happiness is in communion with the Divine. That happiness is independent of the material conditions. Material conditions do not bring happiness. If you have no desire, material conditions may be around you, but they are nothing and do not mean anything to you. If you have a desire, that desire takes the form of pleasure which is temporary. A Yogi, whose mind is above all desires, absorbs himself in *samadhi*. Now ordinary people may think that I am trying to make everybody independent of and indifferent to the objects of the material world through which we obtain pleasure, but that is not the idea. The idea is to make you rise above all pain and to be independent of material objects which do not bring happiness. Exercise your judgement and discrimination to realize whether such objects do bring happiness in reality. As long as we are self-deluded, we may think that such objects have brought these happiness. The mental condition may depend upon some agreeable or pleasant feeling which must harmonize with our own conditions or desire.

What you call the very dearest thing, if you analyse, that thing would not appear to you the dearest at all. As long as you are self-deluded, you think that thing to be the dearest, but if you say you are a soul and a child of God, and not dependent upon it, why should you think you are dependent. "Luminous within, having the light of knowledge in the soul" and that is the ideal. It is not knowledge which is relative and discursive, but it is the knowledge of our true Self or the *Atman*, as related to our soul and also related to the universal Spirit. Some people have a longing to meet friends after death and thus to be happy. If they have not been happy in this

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरागमस्तथान्तज्योतिरेव यः ।

स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥५२४

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says: 'ब्रह्म एव सन् ब्रह्म अय्येति' (४।४।६)।

life, or in the pleasures that come through the association with such friends, which is temporary, how can they know that it will be eternal after death? It will be just as temporary, because the friend whom they are longing to meet, has different desires, tendencies, impressions, and ideas. He will be born again somewhere under certain conditions to fulfil his desires, and you will be born in another place to fulfil your desires. What is the change of meeting them? And if there be a change, how long will it last? There will be separation sooner or later.

The wise may say that nothing but God can be eternal. Individual souls may continue to exist after death for a long time and two souls may be tied together for a long time, but the time is sure to come when there will be separation. So, if that separation is inevitable, why should we not be ready for that separation even at this very moment? Why should we wait one thousand years, or ten thousand or a million years? Ten thousand or million years when compared with eternity, is just like five minutes. Separation will come, but separation between the individual soul and God will never come. That is the only true thing which is eternal and that is relation between the soul and God. But relation between other souls living on different planes cannot be eternal.

One soul may achieve and reach a certain state of development, another may not succeed in reaching it. So what is the change of reaching each other at all? If two souls living on different planes, meet, they will not be happy. They will be going in different directions ; and they will try to get away from each other. So where is the desired change under such conditions? Children love to meet their parents and parents love to meet the children after death. This is very well, but when we realize the conditions as outside of judgement and reason, and view this in the highest light of wisdom or spiritual wisdom and knowledge, we find they are transitory and are not worth-having. Only that relation, as I have already said, is worth-having, and that is relation between the individual soul and God. Therefore the wise man longs to keep that relationship alive and let other relations be dead. He does not care for the hundreds and thousands of attachments and desires of worldly people. They cannot get beyond that plane for a long time. Let them get experience, but if they have the spiritual

awakening and if they long for that which is unchangeable and eternal, let them remember that relation between the individual soul and God is the only real thing and all other relations are transitory and subject to change.

The Brahman state (*brahman-bhava*) cannot be obtained by him whose mind has been disturbed by doubts, but it can be obtained by him whose doubts have been removed and whose self is controlled and whose wish is to know God and to see Him in all living creatures. These things we should practise. First of all, we should see whether our mind is disturbed or not. If the mind is disturbed, we must try hard to destroy that state of disturbance and not commit any more sinful acts.

Very few amongst us have our doubts removed, but we must try to have these doubts removed by faith, knowledge, discrimination, right reasoning, and also by concentration and meditation. We must struggle hard to get into the state of God-consciousness. If we have doubts, we should go into meditation and put questions to our souls and wait until the answer comes. We must be patient to remove these doubts one after another. We must keep our minds controlled from the impulse of desire, passion, and anger. When we do work with our bodies, we must keep this thought in our minds that we should never injure any one, but do good to every one. That would be the object of our life. All humanities are objects of love. Do good to all and have this thought always. Even if any one tries to kill you, you should not turn your hand against him, or rouse an unpleasant thought against him in your mind. You have really no enemy if you realized the all-pervading *Atman* within yourself.

To the devotees who are free from desire and anger, who have controlled their thoughts, and who have known their true self, the Brahman appears to exist everywhere. Wherever they go, they find the same peaceful state. They find happiness everywhere. Just as when you put on your shoes, you are not harmed by thorns and sharp stones. You do not have to cover the whole world. Just put on the shoes of your love and self-control and you can walk everywhere without anything hurting. You can go anywhere and find the same peace everywhere. But he whose mind is disturbed, finds peace nowhere, no one can help such a person. Therefore we must try our best to keep

our thoughts under control and to free from all the imperfections and wicked thoughts and not to forget that we are souls unattached to anything. The real relation we have is to the eternal Being, the Soul of our souls, the dearest friend, the Father, the Mother and everything, and then we will find the Brahman and realize eternal bliss everywhere at every moment of our lives

CHAPTER XXII

A TRUE SANNYASI AND A YOGI

The last three verses of the fifth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* describe the Yoga or the method of realization through meditation, as it is called, and the sixth chapter contains the explanation of the three verses, which are like aphorisms. They contain the essence of what will be described in the sixth chapter.

“Shutting out the external contacts of the senses with the sense objects and fixing the sight between the eye-brows, and equalising the outgoing and the incoming breaths which start from the nostrills, controlling the senses, mind, and intellect, and having *moksha*, the emancipation of the will from the bondages of the world as the highest goal, being free from desire, fear and anger, the sage is thus liberated”.¹

These lines describe the whole of Raja Yoga through meditation, which is the seventh step of Raja Yoga. When you sit in meditation, you will have to withdraw your sense powers from external objects, you will have to fix your eyes between the eye-brows, and you will have to equalise the outgoing and incoming breaths. The breathing will be very slow and imperceptible almost. It will be like internal breathing, and external breathing will stop, and the mind will be under perfect

¹ स्पर्शान् कृत्वा वहिवह्यश्चाक्षुश्चैवान्तरे ब्रूवोः ।

प्राणापाणौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥

यतेन्द्रियमनौ बुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।

विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥५॥२७-२८

This process or practice of Yoga will be elaborately explained in the sixth chapter. Acharya Sankara said:

‘सम्यग्दर्शननिष्ठानां संन्यासिनां सद्योमुक्तिरुक्ता कर्मयोगश्च ईश्वरार्पितसर्वभावेन ईश्वरे ब्रह्मणि आधाय क्रियमाणः सत्त्वशुद्धि-ज्ञानप्राप्ति-सर्वकर्मसंन्यासक्रमेण मोक्षायेति भगवान् * ‘वक्ष्यति च’’, and for this reason he (Sri Krishna) explained the Dhyana-yoga.

understanding will not be disturbed by any thought or idea, because the highest ideal will be held before the mind and that highest ideal is the ideal of freedom, or liberation, or emancipation. If there be any other thought or idea higher than that, the desire will be for the realization of the object of that thought.

Fear may come, or one may become angry, discontented, or unhappy. So, in order to become a perfect Yogi and to attain to the highest state of realization, one should be free from fear and anger, and should exercise self-control. One should control the mind wandering through its objects, and should equalise the breathing

He who can accomplish this, attains to instant emancipation or liberation. But those who are not ready and cannot control the mind, equalise the breath and withdraw the senses from external objects, should practise Karma Yoga. They should work, and through work, when the heart or mind will be purified, they will be ready for the higher realization. Sri Krishna has said this many times, and will declare many times over again.

The twentysixth verse of the fifth chapter which speaks of the devotees who are free from desire and anger, have controlled their thoughts, and have known the true nature of the self. The Brahman, or the Supreme Bliss, exists everywhere, but, in order to attain to that blissful state, one should practise meditation. Before that perfect state of meditation is acquired, one should withdraw the sense powers from the sense objects of the world. Then sense perceptions often disturb our minds. The mind is often disturbed by external noise, or by any odour, or by any kind of sensation that may come from the contact of external objects ; and the eyes, if we keep them just as we do when we go to sleep, we may go to sleep. But so far it is concerned, that will not be the right way. If you keep them wide open, you will be attracted by some sight which will distract the mind and produce a kind of sensation, and some thought or idea will come up which will disturb the state of meditation. But if you fix them between the eye-brows and, closing the eyes, look forward, without making any special effort to fix them simply look forward, the mind enjoy a perfect equipoise. At the time when

you go to sleep, do not keep your eyes in that position, but just go to sleep and do not look forward, or try to fix your eyesight between the eye-brows, but at the time of meditation, in order to avoid sleep, one should fix the eyes in that way, and then when the mind is concentrated upon any object, the breathing will be slow and it will almost be imperceptible. When the mind is absolutely concentrated, at the time of supersensiousness, the breathing stops, and you are not conscious of your own breath. It gradually becomes so slow and imperceptible that in the end you will not feel it, and it entirely stops. But you need not get alarmed, because the breathing process depends upon the mental activity. When the mind is absolutely at rest, all these physical activities stop. That shows the power of the mind over the body, and at that time the mind should not be distracted by any thought or idea, because anything that distracts the mind, brings it down to the plane of that object or idea, and it takes us far from the object of meditation. The object of meditation should always be the Supreme Being, the highest Truth, but those who have not held the idea of liberation or absolute emancipation as the highest goal of life, should not practise this and should not struggle hard for realization. If they have desires for earthly objects, let them have these things and they are not ready for the highest. But do you think that they will be happy under these circumstances? No, they will have desire, fear, anger, passion, restlessness, unhappy discontent, etc. They will never have peace.

The only way to find peace and unchangeable happiness is through divine communion, and that can come to one who has risen above the plane of desire, fear, and anger. We can shut out all the external objects and all perceptions, thoughts and ideas. Ordinarily we think we would die and be annihilated or destroyed if we tried to disperse our thoughts, impressions, ideas, and perceptions, but the Yogi says: "No, you will live much better, and otherwise you will be disturbed by those things". If we could not live or exist without these sensations, perceptions, thoughts, and ideas, they would have been part and parcel of our being. But when we know that we could separate ourselves from these objects without losing our being or existence, then that shows that these things do not belong to us in reality, although we consider for the time being that

they are part and parcel of and one with us. But still, even our mind is not one with our true self, our true self is far from the mind.

Think of the state in which the Yogis lived when they said those things, that even the mind and intellect, and thoughts and ideas, do not belong to you. You are more or less mental, but as a spirit, you are above and beyond that. Your true nature is divine, and, of course, the Divinity, the essence of the Creator, the essence of the Light of the universe, is the absolute Spirit, and from that common source proceed all the thoughts and ideas. When the reflection of that infinite source of existence and intelligence falls upon the finer matter in vibration, it is called life-breath or *prana*. Ordinarily we take air through the nostrils into our system, and then we breathe out, but this breathing process is only physical, governed by the mental activities. But the spirit, the true self, the *Atman* of the individual, is beyond all actions. It is not subject to breathing. It is the source of life, but at the same time it is not subject to the conditions of earthly life.

It may be difficult to grasp the idea which has been expressed here, but ordinary persons who do not perform any work, sit quietly. Do you think those persons would attain to that state of realization? No, only those who have their minds fixed upon the Highest, realize the Truth. And what is highest, is described in this verse: "Having gained control of the mind and senses and the breath, one should fix his thoughts upon the Lord of all sacrifices and all austerities. The Great Lord of all is the friend of all beings. He who knows me as such, attaineth to everlasting peace".² When you sit in that state of meditation without being disturbed by external conditions, thoughts, ideas, desires, and passions, you attain peace. And one whose whole soul runs like a river to the ocean of divine intelligence and bliss i.e. to the One who is the Lord of all creatures and the friend of all beings, attains everlasting peace.

He who knows this, is always peaceful. He cannot have any disturbance of any kind, and is happy and contented, no matter under what circumstances he may be placed. He is the

²

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।

सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमश्नुते ॥५॥२९

friend of all beings, because he does good to every one without seeking any return whatsoever. That is the duty of a true friend. A true friend does everything for the good of another without seeking anything in return. When that kind of friendship exists, it means that it is divine. God is the Lord of all, because He is the governor and the witness of everything that we do or think. You cannot hide anything from God, because He is the knower of your mind and thoughts and ideas. He is the *Antarayamin*.

Now the same knower who is in us, is the divine knower of the universe. If you know every thought that comes to your mind, every idea that rises in your mind, every perception, concept, sensation, impression, and everything that is in you, you know them. Put God in your place, then you will know why He is the knower of your mind as well as the knower of everything. Do not call that you are the petty self, but call that you are the Divine Being, and then the whole trouble vanishes. Then no longer you have the senses of I, me and mine, but you will remain as the knower. How can you hide anything from God, because He knows everything. In that way, we come to realize that we live and move and have our being in God. Actually it cannot be anything else, because He is the essence of our souls and of everything.

He who knows this, knows the Truth. It may be asked as to how would He know? What kind of knowledge is this? He knows it as one with His true Self. The knower within you is not a separate being from the universal knower who knows the universe. Then we become like a part of that universal or cosmic knower, who is the infinite source of intelligence, knowledge and bliss. He becomes free from all bondage and self-delusion. Now what is self-delusion? The idea that we are separated from God, that we can live independently, and that we are the individuals who have come into existence as independent of God, is self-delusion.

But, on the contrary, when that liberation (*moksha*) comes, we feel that we cannot raise one finger without being directed by the will of the almighty Spirit. Then we realize that one's whole body and mind become the implement, directed and guided by the divine will. The omnipotent and omniscient will is working through so many forms. He has an infinite

number of hands, eyes, and legs. He walks through all human beings, He hears through all human beings, He thinks through all minds. The individual must transcend all the boundaries and limitations, and become one with the universal, and that is the goal of all religions.

All religions lead us to break down the limits and walls that separate us from the universe to become one with the universe. God cannot be limited to the concept of a creator. He is the one universal Being and we are the individualised sparks as mortal ones and when we find the relation that exists between the individual spirits as intelligence and the individualised *Atman* of intelligence, then this *Atman* becomes one with the Infinite. It realizes that this is a part and parcel of and inseparable from that infinite space. That is what is meant by emancipation and freedom.

In the fifth chapter, Sri Krishna has described that by various methods and through various kinds of devotion, when knowledge of our true self comes, that self-knowledge brings the emancipation of the soul. In the last three verses of the sixth chapter that we have already heard, it is described, but at first, he tries to show that those who are not ready for that kind of meditation and are living in the world and are engaged with works of every-day life, will not give up all works and go to the wilderness, because they are not ready.

That question has been raised in our minds just as it rose in the minds of those who lived at that time, nearly 1400 years before the birth of Christ. Human minds are always and everywhere the same. The questions that arise in our minds, rose in the minds of the ancient thinkers. Wherever there is human mind with the power of expression of intelligence and understanding, there is also to be found that question, and wherever there is longing for knowledge, there must be the questioning.

“He who without depending upon the fruits of actions performs actions, is a Sannyasi and a Yogi, and not only he who performs daily sacrifices, pours oblations of butter and other things into fire is a Sannyasin and a Yogi”.³ When a person

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरर्गलः चाक्रिय ॥६॥

became a Sannyasin or a Yogi, he is ready to spend the life in meditation and is ready to devote his energy to the contemplation of the Divine Being. A real Sannyasin gives up all these sacrifices pouring of oblations into fire. The life of a householder is quite different, as he cannot give up sacrifices and austerities and all the duties of life. Performances of daily sacrifices and pouring of oblations of butter and other things into fire are the daily duties of a householder (*grihastha*), but by giving up all these things one cannot attain to the highest end unless he is ready. But, on the contrary, if a person performs those household duties without seeking the reward of results of those actions, he is considered to be much better. He is one who has really renounced everything, and is also a Yogi or a Sannyasi.

A Yogi means one who has gained perfect control over his mind. Outward renunciation is not necessary, unless the inner nature has succeeded in renouncing all actions of the body, desire, fear, anger, etc. But when that internal renunciation

In the eighteenth chapter, Sri Krishna has defined the true nature of a Sannyasi.

कामान्यां कर्मणां न्यासं संन्यासं कवयो विदुः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥१८१२

Regarding real significances of *sannyasa* and *yoga*, Madhusudana Sarasvati said in his commentary:

‘संन्यासो हि त्यागं, चित्तगतविक्षेपाभावश्च योगः, तौ चाख्य विद्यते फलत्यागं फलतृष्णारूपचित्तविक्षेपाभावाच्च । कर्मफल-तृष्णात्याग एवात्र गौण्या वृत्त्या संन्यास-योगशब्दाभ्यामभिधीयते । अग्निशब्देन सर्वाणि कर्माणि उपलक्ष्य निरग्निरिति संन्यासी, क्रियाशब्देन चित्तवृत्तीरुपलक्ष्य अक्रिय इति निरुद्धचित्तवृत्तियोगी च कथ्यते । तेन न निरग्निः संन्यासी मन्तव्यः, न चाक्रियो योगी मन्तव्य इति यथा सञ्ख्यमुभयव्यतिरेको दर्शनीयः ।’

Sankara similarly said:

‘संन्यासः परित्यागः, स यत्यास्ति स संन्यासी, च योगी—च योगश्चित्तसमाधानं स यत्यास्ति स योगी, च इत्येवं गुणसम्पन्नोऽयं मन्तव्यो, न केवलं निरग्निरक्रिय एव संन्यासी योगी च इति मन्तव्यः ।’

The contention of Anandagiri is the same.

has come, externally you may remain anywhere and attain to the highest goal through that internal renunciation. Of course, when the internal renunciation is very strong and when you have no desire for anything, you will not do anything for a selfish end. If you have no desire to go anywhere, you do not do it. One who does not care to live as householder, does not live in that way. So the internal renunciation should be the first. You should not consider the external renunciation as of primary importance. That is not the idea. But it is the growth from within. The whole nature must be clothed with the garment of renunciation, and that renunciation will come when all your desires are fulfilled and you do not care for anything of the world. That is the true renunciation, and Yoga means an undisturbed state of mind.

When you sit quietly in meditation or contemplation, your mind is not disturbed by anything. When you have accomplished that, you are a Yogi. You may live in a house and have children, a family and a business, but if you can put your mind under perfect control, you have accomplished Yoga. So it is not necessary that one should go into the forest and adopt a forest life. In India, there had been many kings and emperors who were on the thrones, but at the same time they were perfect Yogis, and nothing would disturb them. Sri Krishna was a charioteer in the battle-field. He was a perfect Yogi. Arjuna was also a perfect Yogi. On the side of the enemies, there were also great Yogis. They performed their works, because they thought it was their duty. As long as they lived, they belonged to the warrior caste, and it was the idea kept it up.

What they call *sannyasa* they know that to be the same as Yoga. A Yogi and a Sannyasin are one, because he who has not renounced his thoughts concerning the fruits of actions, cannot be a Yogi. There has never been any one who became a Yogi, who had not renounced his thoughts concerning the fruits of actions. So if you wish to become a Yogi, first of all you should work without seeking the results of your works. Do work for work's sake and have your heart purified by that kind of work, because the desire for the results of our works would bring anxiety. And as long as there are worry and anxiety in our minds, so long there is no rest, peace, and contentment.

Therefore, if you live in the world, try to get rid of your worry and anxiety. That is the first thing you should do. When you perform any work, if you have the desire for the result, you are worried to death and how you can accomplish that. But if you perform your work with best ability, without seeking the result and knowing at the same time that the result is bound to come, because you have done your best, you are contented, and if it does not come, even then you are happy, because you could not do better, you have used the best of your ability, and there it ended. By worrying you do not get any thing, and you break yourself to pieces. How can you enjoy peace of mind when the demon of worry and anxiety has taken possession of your heart and soul?

If you wish to become a real Yogi, the first thing you will have to do, is to make your mind restful, without seeking the results of actions. Fear never made any one a Yogi, nor any one who has not renounced his thoughts concerning the fruits of action, and that expression includes all other thoughts, because every action that we perform with our body and mind, must produce certain results in our life. All actions and thoughts and ideas are nothing but a constant seeking of the results. What can we get out of them? We should analyse our life and take away that part of results and nothing will remain if we do not have desires for the results of actions which we are doing constantly.

What keeps us down on this plane? This longing for the results of all that we are doing keeps us down on the plane of sense. In the early morning when we get up, we have the desire to do this or that, we figure out the whole of our daily work. We are running about and trying to do a thousand things at one time, and that means we do not accomplish any thing at all. In America, people accomplish very little, and the greatest thing they do accomplish is nervous prostration. They think that they are doing the best work and using their power in the best possible way, but they produce foolishness. They are really wasting their nervous energy, not accomplishing much and killing themselves. So they cannot be the Yogis. Therefore, the person who wishes to gain absolute peace and realization of the highest ideal, should first learn to control his mind from anxieties and worries. For, a devotee who wishes to attain to

Yoga, must give up the desire for results. Action is said to be the means, and it is work without having the desire for the results. As I have already explained several times, that kind of work will purify the mind, and when the mind is purified, all the blessed qualities are revealed. But when one has attained to Yoga, what will be the result?

From the cessation of actions, renunciation will come naturally, because when our mind is absolutely concentrated upon the Supreme, earthly duties vanish and we cannot help it. The nearer we approach God, the farther we are from the world. To the extent we go deep down in the world, so far we are away from the divine source. Think of those living like animals in this world. What is their mind and thoughts, and how do they live? They never think for a moment of the Supreme Being at all. They go to church and have devotional exercises, but all the time their minds are on their business, that is nothing. What results do they get? Nothing, rather they live just as they are and after a life-time they live the same, and they cannot accomplish anything. But, if we put our heart and soul in anything, we will accomplish the object. There may be difficulties and obstacles, but those will be removed gradually. If we direct our same heart and soul toward God, we will attain the highest wisdom. We cannot have two hearts and two souls, but we have only one. Let us put the whole thing on one side of the balance and that side goes down. So mind and soul must be fixed on the Highest, and we should not care whether we lose other things or not. It should be remembered that he who seeks God, does not lose anything. How can we have God and mammon at the same time? But our modern churches say that we can have God and mammon at the same time, as they are greater than Christ. They want to give to the world a new religion, pretending they are following the teachings of Christ. But God and mammon cannot be served at the same time. If we seek the world, we will have God. Where there is divinity, there cannot be the animal nature. There cannot be also ordinary humanity. Humanity is a limited expression of divinity. Wherever there is the expression of humanity, there is limitation.

If we do not care for manifestation, we should go to that absolute source the *Atman*, where there is no manifestation, and

in trying to do that, we will have to leave everything that is in the human, and we cannot help it. Therefore, one who wishes to become a Yogi or to realize God, should perform actions and, at the same time, should try to control the mind and should free it from the desires for the results of those actions. But when he has attained to Yoga, he will cease from all actions. Then he is free from all duties, and duties can never bind him. Then his whole duty is toward God. He has nothing else in the whole world. God is his Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Friend, Relative, and everything. Then he cannot have anything else, how can he?

A realized man does not see his mother in earthly form. Then he treats his earthly father and mother as children of God, just as others are, and he thinks himself as the child of the Almighty Being. Therefore, Christ said: "Who is my mother, who is my brother?" The Sannyasin would say, 'who is my mother?' The Sannyasin renounces every thing. He treats his father and mother as he would treat any living creature of the world without any earthly attraction.

Establishing the relationship between his soul and God, a Sannyasi lives and moves in the world, otherwise he is dead to the world. There is no other wealth equal to this feeling of oneness. So all-pervading God is in everything. You will not want anything of the world, when you will feel and say from the very bottom of your soul that you are divine, because God does not want anything. How can you have begging and divinity at the same time? Truthfulness, character, steadiness, humility, straightforwardness—all these are the best virtues. What more do you want? These are divine qualities, and if you can acquire one-hundredth part of any of these virtues, you are the living God on earth. I do not expect that any of you will accomplish all of them to perfection, but try to accomplish one-hundredth part of these qualifications or attributes which are divine of course, and you will have to attain to the level of perfection gradually.

A Yogi is one who has succeeded in attaining to those virtues to a greater extent than ordinary mortals do today on this earth, and that is the difference between the ordinary man and a Yogi. A Yogi has no ambition for anything except the highest ambition for God. He sees the divine presence in every

one, and there he sees only perfection. A Yogi does not possess anything, and yet at the same time, he is the lord and master of all. He does not have any need or necessity. So a Yogi is he who, renouncing all thoughts, is not attached to sense objects and actions. A Yogi is said to have attained to Yoga. That is the simplest thing, and that is the simplest definition of a Yogi and a Sannyasin. You will find this in these verses: "When a man, renouncing all thoughts of the world, or of anything connected with the world or proceeding from selfishness, is not attached to the objects of the world or actions with their results, he is said to have attained to Yoga", etc.⁴

By these we do not mean indifference. As God is not attached to anything and does not need anything, all His desires are fulfilled always, because desire means pain and suffering, so if one can attain to that state, he has become divine.

So all the efforts of a Yogi, or of a Sannyasin, help him to attain to that state of absolute happiness, contentment, and freedom. Nothing else is worth-having. You may have vast wealth and all the possessions of an emperor, still you may be most miserable. From an earthly standpoint you may be very high, but the earthly standpoint is very low. Do not think whether after you have passed away anything you have done, will help you in reaching that abode of happiness which is the highest ideal of life. If you have any desire, that desire will be fulfilled and another desire will come and, as long as they are unfulfilled, they will bring misery just in the same way. Then what is the the good of all these desires?

Therefore drive out the big desires with proper analysis, right reasoning, and right discrimination, understanding that

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।

न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥

आरुक्षोर्मुनिर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।

योगारूढस्य तत्सर्वं शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्यते ।

सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥६॥२-४

Sankara, Anandagiri, Madhusudana Sarasvati and other commentators have elaborately dealt with these three verses.

they are transitory and not eternal We should make our minds free from all bondage, and long for that which is highest, best, eternal and everlasting, and that will mean emancipation of the soul, and attainment of freedom and liberation, and in that state the soul becomes one with the Supreme Spirit, and becomes immortal.

CHAPTER XXIII

PURIFIED MIND IS OUR REAL FRIEND

Sri Krishna has said: "Let a man raise himself by himself, let him not lower himself for he alone is the friend of himself and he alone is the enemy of himself".¹ Our own soul² is our friend as well as our enemy. When we let our soul remain entangled in the meshes of *maya* and when this self-delusion

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव विपुरात्मनः ॥६।५

Further in the sixth verse Sri Krishna has similarly said,

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।

अनात्मतस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥६।६

That is, when the mind is controlled and calm by discrimination, then it helps us as a real and faithful friend, because being devoid of all distractions and modifications, the mind shines as a medium of achieving God-realization. But when the mind is not properly controlled and calm, it acts as an enemy.

² (a) The word 'soul' here conveys the idea of 'mind'. The word soul or *ātma* has been used in the *Gita* in different senses, as for example, *jīvātman*, *paramātman*, *bhūtātman*, *pratyagātman*, etc. In the *Maitrāni-Upanishad* (4.11), the mind has been described as the cause of both bondage and freedom.

‘मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः । बन्धाय विषयासक्तं मुक्त्यैर्निविषयं
स्मृतम् ॥

(b) Madhusudana Sarasvati also said regarding the verse 6.5:

‘आत्मना’ विवेकयुक्तेन मनसा आत्मनं स्वं जीवं संसारसमुद्रे निमग्नं तत उद्धरेत्
उत् उद्धं हरेद्विषयासङ्गपरित्यागेन योगारूढतामापादयेदित्यर्थः ।

Regarding the verse 6.6, he said again:

आत्मा कार्यकारणसंघातो येन जितः स्ववशीकृत आत्मनैव विवेकयुक्तेन मनसैव,
न तु शास्त्रादिना, तस्यात्मा स्वरूपमात्मनो बन्धुरुच्छुक्लप्रवृत्त्यभावेन स्वहितकरणात् ।”

Madhusudana Sarasvati emphatically said that mind cannot be controlled by only reading the books i.e. *śāstras*, but discrimination (*viveka* or *vichāra*) is necessary for controlling the mad rush of the mind. Similarly the *Ātman* cannot be realized by only book-knowledge and intellectual apprehension, but proper discrimination, concentration, and meditation are necessary for the realization of the Self.

or attachment to the contingent earthly things which is designated in this verse, we become inimical to ourselves, but when we strive to rise above this changing mundane world to reach the spiritual plane and to realize the highest truth, the *Atman*, our soul acts as our dear friend. So we must not let our souls sink in the dark ocean of phenomenal world as well as in the ocean of anxiety, sorrow, suffering, pain, birth, death, and rebirth, but we must learn the method by which we can raise the soul from this mundane world to the space of the Supreme Deity. Those who are inimical to us on this earth, turn out to be our enemies because of ourselves; the cause is not in them but in us.

Whenever we find any one who is unfriendly and unkind to us, we must know that the cause is in ourselves. Therefore, we must try to trace the cause of evil in ourselves and not in others. We must find out our own faults and correct the evils so that we can make the best use of our opportunities to raise our souls and make them friendly to all living creatures.

What are the characteristics of the soul which is friendly to us, and what are the characteristics of the mind which is unfriendly and inimical to ourselves? To him is his own self (mind) a friend, who by his self has conquered himself, but to him who is not self-subjugated, his own self acts like an enemy. There is a great truth described in this verse, and it is the great secret disclosed by this verse 6.5 for unveiling the dark cover of the *Atman*, though essentially the *Atman* is free and uncovered forever and ever. First of all, we must know what are the conditions of friendliness and what are the conditions of inimical acts. The conditions of friendliness are described here as self-control i.e. control of passion, desire and imperfection. A lack of self-control and of self-subjugation is the condition of the soul's³ being inimical to ourselves. We must control our mind and senses. The aggregate of senses, sense-powers and matter, which is known as the gross physical body, should be under our control in the first place; then the mind with all its various functions of modifications (*vruttis*) should be brought under subjection. He who is not self-subjugated, is an enemy to himself. Here we must learn that self-subjugation is one of the conditions of spiritual life.

³ By the word soul, we should mean mind.

If we wish to be spiritual, first we must learn this. We must make our souls friendly and, if the innate tendency be against it, we must know our souls are acting as enemies to ourselves. That which holds us down on this plane of the phenomenal world, is the influence of an enemy, no matter what be the relation of that influence, from what source it may come, from father, mother, brother, sister or any other relative. We must know that it is not desirable. It is an obstacle in our path of progress and we must learn to overcome that obstacle by our efforts. By self-efforts like prayer and self-devotion we may seek the help of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and gradually we will gain more strength, and then we will be able to overcome all these obstacles.

At first we may not succeed and we may find that obstacles are stronger than ourselves, but if we have patience and perseverance, and if we hold on to the idea, we succeed in the end, and we get the better of these obstacles in the end.

In order to control ourselves, we must exercise discrimination and use the right knowledge of things as they are in reality, and not as they appear to be for the time being. The appearances of things and persons delude us extremely. So we go below appearances ; we must go to the bottom and see what the real nature there is. We must not allow ourselves to be dragged and enslaved to earthly conditions of life. On the contrary, we must resist all the temptations that come in our way, and with a pure heart we can gain enormous strength and power, if we go to source of all strength, the fountain-head from which we can draw everything that we need. But very few have access to that source. The door that lies between that infinite source of strength and ourselves, is closed to ordinary persons but that door will be opened through devotion, right living, right thinking, and discrimination. That will be the sword which will be able to cut off the source of all impure thoughts and ideas that rise in our minds.

“He who is self-controlled, serene, and tranquil, has a soul that remains steadfast and fixed in the Supreme Spirit. He remains the same in heat and cold, in pleasure and pain, in honour and dishonour.”⁴ These dual experiences, heat and cold,

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ॥६।७

pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, respect and disrespect—all these bother ordinary minds. Ordinary minds cannot keep their tranquility or calmness and silence when placed under the disturbed conditions of life, but the serene, controlled self remains free and firm in the Supreme Spirit. He sees the unchangeable in the midst of changes, the one absolute existence in the midst of relative existences, and holds to it as if it were a fort. Whenever he is affected by a pleasure or a pain, he takes refuge under the walls of that fort, where he stays unmolested by the external world

Through self-control comes that peace. Self-control means the control of all the disturbances i.e. of everything that disturbs the peace of our minds, internal and external, and through that self-control comes absolute tranquility and peace, and in that state of peacefulness and tranquility, the Supreme and Divine Self actually becomes his own self. Then distinction vanishes. The same self acting under limitations as an ordinary mortal or an imperfect being, will reach perfection, and be united with the Supreme Soul or the Supreme Spirit of the universe. God⁵ is that state of tranquility. The Supreme Spirit will begin to manifest in the soul (mind or *jivatman*), and the soul will be transfigured. The transfigurations of all these *Avatars* or Incarnations⁶ and sages mean nothing but the transfiguration of the individual soul into the Divine Spirit. When a person attains to that state, that state clothes the individual soul with the divine garment and that garment never leaves the soul.

⁵ God as expounded by the *Gita*, is the Purushottama, who transcends *Kshara* and *Akshara*

God of Advaita Vedanta is somewhat inferior to the *nirguna* Brahman, because God, according to non-dualistic Vedanta, shines being associated with the causal nescience (*karana-ajnāna*), but the absolute Brahman transcends *maya* which is the cause of name and form (*nama-rupa*) and of phenomenal appearance of the world. But it should be remembered that the *Gita* always establishes God, who is the Purushottama-Brahman, the supreme cause of *Kshara* and *Akshara* ('बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि'—6.9).

⁶The *Gita* admits the existence and utility of the *Avatars*, and it says:

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य शानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानामधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥(४।७)।

Sankare also said: 'स्वमायया देहवानिव जात इव ।'

As God is always the same in the dual earthly conditions, He is never disturbed. So the soul remains undisturbed in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour. If one adores and another condemns such a soul, the adoration and condemnation appear to be the same to him.

There are many instances of the Yogis in India, who are adored and worshipped by hundreds, which they do not mind and which never makes them self-conceited and never rouses pride in their hearts, and when they are disturbed, condemned and persecuted by hundreds, that does not rouse their passions, and still they show that contentment and happiness which are their property and which they treasure on the spiritual plane. So we must learn to be peaceful through self-control, and try to remain the same in heat and cold, pleasure and pain.

Ordinary people may think it is like a state of indifference like that of a stone. But that is not true, it means the exercise of a tremendous power of self-control. The natural tendency of the mind is to get disturbed under these circumstances, but it is as if you were holding the reins and stopping that natural disturbance and showing the power of tranquility and peace. It is not indifference, and it is not like becoming a stick or stone, but it is like becoming a living God on this earth.

“A true Yogi whose soul is contented with wisdom and self-realization of the Truth, who remains unshaken and who is self-controlled, is called a saint, and for whom a lump of earth or a stone, or a piece of gold, is equal”⁷ A true yogi

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।

युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥६॥८

By the word युक्तः Sridhara Swami calls योगारूढः i.e. who has attained perfect balance of mind and has fixed and absorbed his mind in the Paramātmān.

(a) Regarding the verse 6.8, Sarkara said:

“ज्ञानेति । ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा । ज्ञानं शास्त्रोक्तपदार्थानां परिज्ञानं, विज्ञानं तु शास्त्रतो ज्ञातानां तथैव स्वानुभवकरणं * * ।”

sees the sameness in a lump of earth or a piece of stone or gold and they are all of equal value to him, the only difference is in the condition of matter. The same matter appears as gold or silver or any other metal or stone or earth. The similarity is there all the same, and the difference is only on the sense plane. If you go below the sense plane, there is no difference. We see the same matter, and what we ordinarily call matter when reduced to energy and force, becomes the same as the Divine will or the Divine energy in action.

There are two kinds of knowledge: the one is knowledge acquired through reading the scriptures, science, and philosophy, and that is ordinarily called knowledge, and other knowledge means realization. What you have learned from books you realize in your own self and make a part of yourself. The essence of the books and scriptures is to be gained in yourself. You have to be the living example of the essence of the scriptures. For instance, if you follow the path of righteousness and truthfulness and practise that all the time under all circumstances, you realize the strength or power which comes from righteousness. That is realization. It is not merely the reading of books, but making the highest Truth, contained in the books, a part of one's own self. You have heard of God and read about God, but that is not enough, but you just feel the presence of the Divinity. To feel God in your soul, is realization.

You may ask: "How can we know that we have felt God"? Your soul know i.e. realize it. Just as we do not ask anybody when the sun rises, the rising sun convinces us of his rising, so when the soul feels the Divinity, there will be no question, but the soul will know i.e. realize that he is the Divinity. So, through realization will come the highest Truth to our soul,

Madhusudana Sarasvati explained the word ज्ञानविज्ञान' as "किञ्च ज्ञानं शास्त्रोक्तानां पदार्थानामोपदेशिकं ज्ञानं, विज्ञानं तदप्रामाण्यशङ्कानिराकरणफलेन विचारेण तथैव तेषां स्वानुभवेनापरोक्षीकरणम् ।"

Here Madhusudan Sarasvati followed the explanation of Sankara.

(b) The word कूटस्थः means 'विषयसन्निधावपि विकारश्चैतन्यः' ।

Therefore Madhusudan Sarasvati also said like Sridhara Swami :

"स योगी परमहंसब्राह्मणः परमवैराग्यमुक्तो योगारूढ इत्युच्यते ।"

and will become the part and parcel of our being. Our being will be inseparable from the Supreme Being, when Divine realization comes.

At present we think that we are separate from the Supreme Being, but really we are not. We have heard over and over again that our true self is one with God. We have got to feel it. How can we feel it? By removing all obstacles that stand in the way of feeling. Why should we practise Yoga and meditation, and live a virtuous life? We should practise Yoga or concentration and meditation for removing the obstacles. All practices, devotional exercises, prayers, and meditations are but different kinds of help or path, not in the way of making you reach God, or bringing God nearer to us, but in the way of removing the obstacles that stand in the way of realization. Very few people understand this. Those who have struggled and attained to a certain height of realization, know that it is so.

You have read and heard of the life of Sri Ramakrishna that he held a lump of earth in one hand and a piece of gold or silver coin in another. He turned them over and said, "earth is gold and gold is earth (*tākā māti, māti tākā*) ; they are of the same virtue ; they produce the same things, food and clothes". So it is with gold. Furniture and other things which we can buy with gold, do not amount to much, if we have no food, nor clothes. What is its virtue then? Just the same as earth has, and we must consider them as such. So, you cannot say that there has not been such a person teaching these things and living up to them. In the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, you will find the illustration of this truth. And this was spoken by Sri Krishna about 1400 years before the birth of Christ, and even today there are many who try to live up to it.

One thing you will notice in India that religion is not theoretical, but is practical. Amongst the Mohammedans you will find that religion is not theoretical, but what they believe, they will try to live up to. But only among the Christians you will find very few who try to live up to what they believe in. Go to India and there you will find poverty. You may find the people poor, but still they live up to their belief. They do not believe in eating only meat ; they would die with the cattle, but never raise a knife to take their life believing meat

is their essential and only food. They do not believe in it. Hundreds of cattle perished, and hundreds of men and women perished with them for want of food, still they would not kill them as their essential food. But if five Americans or Europeans go near the North or South pole, and if there be a lack of food, and if they cannot get any, they would hold a lottery and kill one of their brothers and live on him, and it has been the case many a time. In Alaska, a few days ago, some men went in search for gold. They were out of food and could not find any. So one of the friends was eaten by the rest, and this is civilization. But if it happened in India, the Hindus would be cannibals, but fortunately, it never happens in India.

“He who is like a disinterested helper to a friend, a foe, an indifferent person, a mediator, who seeks the welfare of both parties who are fighting, the hateful, the relative, the righteous and the unrighteous, is esteemed and is really a Yogi.”⁸ Is it possible to see the sameness and to regard all these different characters equally? What kind of man is he who can see the sameness amongst all these different characters? He is a disinterested one who does good to others without seeking anything in return and counting the blood relation, or any other kind of relation, who gives help to others and enjoys helping others.

A friend is different from the disinterested helper, because he (friend) helps from love or affection. To a disinterested helper, a friend or a foe, is alike. He is a person who does not care whether two persons are fighting or quarrelling. He is indifferent to gain or lose. He is like a meditator i.e. one who regards as his own self both parties and tries to find the welfare of both. He does not discriminate between the righteous and virtuous ones and the sinful ones. He will have to see the sameness.

The sameness is in the divine nature which underlies all these different manifestations of character. The Divinity dwells in all these varieties of character, as a fish dwells under the scum of a lake under the surface, and you cannot see the fish

8

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमभ्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।

साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥६।९

from above the surface. So from above the surface of a person's character we do not see the Divinity, but those who have realized the true Self, can see the Divine Being dwelling under the appearances of so many different characters.

Consequently, it is not impossible to see the sameness in the midst of those varieties. Only a true Yogi can see that, and others can never see that, because their eye-sight is on the surface, while the Yogi's eye-sight is spiritualised by the Self-realization of the oneness between the individual soul and the Supreme Spirit.

In order to gain that realization what does a Yogi do? A Yogi constantly keeps the mind steady remaining in seclusion and tries to live in seclusion as much as he can. He is never to be bothered by conditions, etc. He remains in seclusion and practise self-control, being free from desire and earthly things and having no possessions. Sri Krishna has described this state of a Yogi in the verse 6.10.⁹

Now one who wishes to be a perfect Yogi in India, does not care for any possessions, because whenever one has possessions he faces botheration, trouble, fight, discontent, unhappiness, and everything, connected with riches and wealth. You find no one happy or contented by having possessions. He who has renounced and does not possess anything, is the happiest, and that abnegation will come voluntarily. If you are forced by

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।

एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥६।१०

Madhusudana Sarasvati explained this verse explicitly. He said:

“‘योगी’ योगारूढ आत्मानं चित्तं सततं निरन्तरं युञ्जीत क्षिप्तमूढविक्षिप्तभूमि-परिखागेन एकामनिरोद्धभूमिभ्यां समाहितं बुधात् । रहसि गिरिगुहादौ योगप्रतिबन्धकदुर्जनादिवर्जिते देशे स्थितः, एकाकी त्यक्तसर्वगृहपरिजनः, संयुक्ती चित्तमन्तःकरणमात्मा देहश्च संयतौ योगप्रतिबन्धकव्यापारश्चन्यौ यस्य स, यतचित्तात्मा * * ।”

Sankara and Anandagiri explained this verse in similar way.

Now it can be asked as to who is a real Yogi or Sannyasi? It has been said that a real Yogi or a Sannyasi is of four kinds and they are: *Vahudaka*, *Kutichaka*, *Hamsa* and *Paramahamsa*. Among these four, the *turiya Paramahamsa-Sannyasi* is the best one, because he has identified himself with the Paramatman, or has realized the transcendental Brahman, which shines above time, space and causation or *māyā*.

circumstances not to possess anything, you will not be happy, but if you give up everything and do not care for it, and if that attitude proceeds from seeing the transitoriness of worldly things and the sameness between the stone and a piece of gold or a lump of earth, you will be really happy. Having realized this sameness, if you can give up everything, you are the happiest person in the world. No one can question that possibility, because there are living examples of such characters.

You must be free from desire, otherwise you will not be able to live alone in seclusion. It is impossible for any one whose mind is full of desire and passions to live alone, or live in seclusion. While going into seclusion such a person would carry a lot of people and things which he cares for, so there is no more retirement, it is just like living in a crowded city or town. Only a few whose minds are on the higher plane can live alone in seclusion, unless on a higher plane a person would go crazy. Solitary confinement is considered to be the worst punishment which is given to a criminal. I often used to think, when I travelled and lived in caves, 'this is the worst punishment' and how I enjoyed it, because it was voluntary and I accepted it of my own free will; but if I were forced to take it up and live, under these circumstances, I would not have enjoyed it.

What should be the posture of a Yogi, and in what way should he sit? Those Yogis used to live in forests and build a little hut to protect themselves from rain and snow. They did not need much clothes; they used to have fire by burning the dry branches of trees and in that way they would keep warm. Regarding myself I can say that when after the demise of my beloved Master, Sri Ramakrishna, I took the life of a Parivrājaka and travelled barefooted on all the places and sacred shrines of India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. I lived some days in Rishikesh near Hardwar. I built there a hut (*jhupri*) of grasses near the bank of the Ganges and used to live alone meditating and reading *Upanishad*, *Vedantasutras* and other *Shastras*. Again I visited Gangotri and Yamunotri, spent in those snowy shrines some nights in some caves, used to take in the day little rice boiled in the hot water of the spring near by and used to protect myself from the extreme cold burning fire with the help of dry leaves and branches of the jungle-trees.

The Yogis of India generally establish a firm seat in a dry spot where it is clean. They would generally choose a spot near some river where the scenery would be most beautiful and pleasing to the eyes, and where the sun-rise and sun-set would be seen. The place must be free from mosquitos and bugs and must be clean, pleasing to the eyes, and healthy. A spot should be selected where there would be no snakes or other reptiles. That seat should not be too high or too low, and if it is too high, there would be the danger of being blown off. In that seat they first spread some grass. There is a particular kind of grass which is called '*kusha*'. This kind of grass is considered to be very disinfectant and healthy. On that grass a skin of a tiger or a leopard or the skin of a wolf or a deer should be spread. Upon that skin a cloth, either silk, or any other kind of cloth, should be spread and then they would sit on that seat. Making the mind one-pointed and senses controlled, seated there they should practise Yoga for self-purification as well as for purification of the mind. What kind of practice is this? It is just as you practise in your own home in the morning and in the evening. The Yogis sit there quietly, undisturbed by any noise and practise introspection, analyse themselves and try to find out the unchangeableness in the midst of the changeable thoughts and ideas. They concentrate their mind upon that unchangeable Being, or Self, which is divine. They sit firm, keeping the body, neck and head in a straight line.

Sri Krishna has said in the *Gita*: "Keeping the body, neck, and head in a straight line, gazing on the tip of the nose without looking around serene-minded, fearless, firm in the view of a godly life, moderating his thoughts and fixing his heart on me, he should sit, having me as his highest end".¹⁰

¹⁰ Sri Krishna has described different postures of sitting (*āsanas*) for getting concentration and meditation in the verses 6.11-13:

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तपम् ॥

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।

उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद् योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।

संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥६॥११-१३

Here you have heard of gazing on the tip of the nose ; it is not meant that we should gaze on the tip of the nose ; it is not meant that we should fix the attention on this particular spot, but the object is not to look around, not to see anything in front of you, but to make the eyes half closed, to withdraw the mind from the visual organ and not to see anything, but, on the contrary, try to fix the sight upon the Self. Some people think that fixing the gaze upon the tip of the nose should be the object, but the mind should not be there. If you try to look at the tip of the nose, the mind will be concentrated there, but the object is not to have the mind there.

Sri Krishna says that a devotee is to 'fix his heart on me, have me as his end and he must moderate his thoughts'.¹¹ Those who are devotional, would concentrate their minds on the form of Krishna or Christ, or any other form of Saviour, when the abso-

In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (8.15) there are similar lines:

“शुचौ देशे स्वाध्यायाम् अधीयान्” * * * etc, though it has been said for proper reading of the Vedas (*svādhyāya*). Madhusudana Sarasvati described the positions and arrangement of the *āsanas* as has been described by Swami Abhedananda.

Regarding “युञ्जथाद् योगमात्मविशुद्धये”, Madhusudana Sarasvati said: “युञ्जीताभ्यसेत् । किमर्थम् ? ‘आत्मविशुद्धये’—आत्मनोऽन्तःकरणस्य सर्वविशेषज्ञान्यत्वेनातिसूक्ष्मतया ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कारयोग्यतायै । ‘दृश्यते त्वग्रथा बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदृशिभिः” (कठ उः १।३।१२) ।”

¹¹ The entire verse of the *Gita* is:

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्तः आसीत् मत्परः ॥

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।

शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥६।१४-१५

The contention of the slokas lies in the fact that unless Yogi's mind is controlled and calm and he likes a celebrated life, he will not be able to concentrate and meditate upon the *Atman*, and when he makes his mind in tune with the Infinite, he attains salvation (*mukti*).

Madhusadana Sarasvati said:

“* * एकाग्रताविवृद्धयं योगं संप्रज्ञातसमाधिमभ्यसेत् । स च ब्रह्माकारमनोवृत्तिप्रवाह एव निदिध्यासनख्यः । * * एतदेवाभिप्रेत्य ध्यानाभ्यासप्रकर्षं विवर्धे भगवन्—‘योगी युञ्जीत सततम्’, ‘युञ्जाद् योगमात्मविशुद्धये’ ‘युक्त आसीत् मत्परः’ इत्यादि बहुवृत्तः ।”

The word ‘मत्संस्थां’ means ‘मत्स्वरूपपरमानन्दरूपां शान्तिं निष्ठामधिगच्छति ।”

lute Spirit is difficult to grasp. If you cannot grasp your true Self which is divine, formless, and the knower of your mental activities, adore and meditate upon some form, and put that form on the plane of the Divinity. Take to any form, but so long as you hold the idea that it is divine, the meditation on it would be helpful, but if you have the form as different or separate from the Divine, it will not be helpful. You will have to hold a form of the Divinity either with a form or formless, or you may make a picture of the Divinity if you wish. If nothing else appeals to you, imagine some form which appeals to you, and think of the Divinity in that form, either in the form of an object, or in the form of a being or some imaginary object. It will be immaterial what form you choose, because you are thinking of the form for your own help for concentration, but the Divine Being is really without form.

So the dualists in India take to these forms, either the form of an Incarnation, or the form of their spiritual master, and they meditate on that form, but they never think of these forms as human beings, but a part of the Divinity. "Thus always concentrating himself with a mind well-balanced, the Yogi attains to that peace abiding in me, and which culminates in Nirvana, or *moksha*." He should always practise concentration upon the Highest, not upon anything else, but upon the supreme Being, the absolute Spirit.

You must do the needful with a mind subdued. As long as your mind is distracted by different things, so long you have not subdued it, but when the mind remains concentrated and one-pointed upon the object of your meditation and also undisturbed for a certain length of time, you have subdued your mind. The passions do not rise, anxiety or worry does not come at that time, but if you succeed in keeping them away from yourself even for the time being, you have subdued your mind. The sense-perceptions do not disturb you for the time being, when your mind is absolutely concentrated. Then you would not hear any noise, and you would not hear the noise even if a band played outside on the street, because it is the mind that hears. Just as you do not hear a band when you are fast asleep even if it be next to your window. So you do not hear when your mind is concentrated and, at the same time, you are not sleeping, but your mind is withdrawn. You have withdrawn

your perception of the perceiving self from the objects of perception

What will be the gain through this kind of concentration? By concentration peace and tranquillity will come. What kind of peace is that? It is not a temporary peace, but "it is peace abiding in me, the divine peace". Then the mind will be restful; the soul, the heart, and everything will be peaceful, and that peace cannot be disturbed. This cannot be compared to anything, and any other kind of feelings that you ever had before. That peace will culminate in Nirvana, which is no other than absolute emancipation or freedom. Then you will be free from the body and from all connections. Nothing will keep you down. Nothing can drag you down to this lower phenomenal plane. Then you will see the difference between the earthly plane and the plane of the Spirit. That difference is immense. It cannot be compared, and the difference is so vast that the space that intervenes between the remotest star and our planet is not long enough and not far enough in comparison. The difference between the Spirit and the earthly sense plane is so great. At present you do not feel it, because you have not risen to that height. But through the required practice, one can rise to such a height.

The word 'Nirvana' is used to convey the idea of eternal peace. It has been used several times in the last verses of the second chapter of the *Gita*. It is also used by the Buddhists. Originally it meant communion of the individual soul with the Universal Spirit. In the *Upanishads*, the word is often used. It is the common expression for absolute freedom, cessation of pain and sorrow and also the attainment of perfection, and that is the meaning of the word explained in Vedanta. When Buddha used Nirvana, some say that he meant the negative side and did not give the positive side, and gradually his disciples and followers understood it as a state of absolute negation and destruction of Self. But it is a fact that Buddha never expressed any opinion either for or against the existence of Self (*Attā*) as a permanent entity of God, and, consequently, a confusion arose in the minds of his followers, and the confusion became so great that different systems of philosophy arose which made the confusion worse confounded.¹²

However, everyone should practise concentration not for gaining any psychic powers, or for earthly or phenomenal object, because, in that case, the highest freedom and peace will not come, and you will be going in the wrong way, as you will read it in Raja Yoga.

In the aphorisms, the healing power and other powers like clairvoyance, communication with spirits, etc., are obstacles, because when you once go into that, it will be hard to get out of it, just as one who is once a medium, cannot separate himself or herself from that mediumistic condition. Because in that position, you will have to give yourself into the hands of the spirits in order to become a medium, and when you are under their perfect control, you are just like a tool in their hands and lose your personality for the time being, and being under this absolute control you cannot exercise any will or thought of your own. So from that negative state it is very difficult to rise to the positive state. You cannot get out of it. The mediums are not properly understood in this country, it is a new thing which has come up. When they find out what spiritualism is, they will not care for it. We know that spirits can communicate, but we do not allow any one to become a medium. If we find any one getting under the control of a spirit, we will make every effort to get that person out from that condition, because it is not desirable. We understand the condition of soul and mind of a medium.

So it is said here that even the *Devas* or bright spirits that help you in certain ways, are not all-knowing. The spirit who comes to control you, may be a worse spirit than yourself, may

¹² The word Nirvāna has been used in Vedānta and *Gita* as the *Brahma-nirvāna*. While discussing the Verse of the *Gita* 6.15, Madhusudana Sarasvati said:

(a) 'निर्वाणपरमा' तत्तत्साक्षात्कारोत्पत्तिद्वारेण सकार्याविद्यानिवृत्तिरूपमुक्ति-
पर्यवसायिणीं मत्स्यां मत्स्वरूपपरमानन्दरूपां शान्तिं निष्ठाभिधानञ्छति ।'

(b) "शान्तिमिति निरोधसमाधिजसंस्कारफलभूता प्रशान्तवाहिता, निर्वाणपरमामिति
धर्ममेवैव समाधेस्तत्ज्ञानद्वारा कैवल्यहेतुत्वम् * * कैवल्यं दर्शितम् ।"

Swami Abhedananda has explained in many places of his different lectures that Nirvāna is a positive state of eternal bliss. Some of the celebrated exponents of Buddhist philosophy also subscribed their opinion that Nirvāna does not convey the idea of nothingness or void (*sunya*), but it conveys suchness or thatness (*tathatā*) which is positive.

be a fool or a murderer or may be very wicked, and may be truthful or not. There are spirits who follow others giving false messages and false names. One will come to you in the form of Plato, perhaps he has never seen his spirit, or heard his name, and he appears to you as Plato.

Even the bright spirits should not be the goal of our meditation, but the Supreme Spirit which is the Soul of our soul, the Life of our life ; on Him we shall fix our mind and think of Him and meditate on Him, and then we shall get the highest freedom, peace, tranquillity, and perfection, and not until then.

These powers may come to you when you are practising concentration or meditation. You may hear a voice or some sounds at a distance, or see visions of different kinds, but if you do not pay attention to or care to use that power, but want the Highest and hold that Ideal, you pass beyond this and get out of the psychic condition.

Some people have asked me: "Is it necessary for everybody to go through psychic experiences?" No, it is not necessary. There are some who do not go through psychic experiences at all. Some, of course, do. Some may be developed psychically to a certain extent, others may be mediumistic. When you start with the practice of Yoga, you cannot get rid of your natural tendency. It is natural that one should get certain experiences, other should not. If you can do so, naturally hold the mind on the Highest and do not pay attention to other things. It would not be necessary that you should have to go through those experiences.

Here the commentators explain the whole third chapter of the Aphorisms of the Raja Yoga where all the different experiences and powers which one can acquire through concentration and meditation are explained. But the attainment of superconsciousness is the highest, and that superconsciousness must not be upon any mental or physical condition. But when you meditate upon the Supreme Spirit, you get that state of superconsciousness, which is the highest. There are various kinds of superconsciousness, and we should avoid all those lower superconscious states in order to get the Highest, and when the Highest is reached, Divine illumination comes, and freedom is at hand.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE STATE OF A SELF-REALIZED YOGI

Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: "Yoga is not for him who eats too much, nor for him who does not eat at all. Yoga is not for him who is addicted to too much sleep, nor for him who is always wakeful".¹ Too much sleep is just as bad as not any at all; too much eating is just as bad as not eating at all; and not eating just as bad as too much eating; for a Yogi too much sleep is not good, nor too much wakefulness. Moderation is to be observed. Therefore one should eat that kind of food which is suitable for the constitution. It is said in the Vedas: "That food which is suited to one's self, does protect and does not injure, but a greater quantity of the same food will injure one, and a smaller quantity will not protect the body. Therefore the middle path or method (*madhyama-panthā*) should be adopted. We must take care of our physical constitution. Hatha Yoga is for the physical results, and physical results should be gained first, because if this body, the instrument, be not kept in proper order, our mind will not remain in a good condition, and we cannot, therefore, expect to get proper results from the practice of Yoga.

There are various kinds of food, meat food, vegetarian food etc. Those who are living a life which is very busy and active and have to waste a great deal of their physical energy and much strength in doing worldly works, should eat more food than a Yogi, who lives quietly in a cave in meditation. That which is good for a Yogi in the forest, would not be good for one living in New York city or any other place. Try to avoid the meat food as much as you can, because meat food brings coarser vibration in the system. Eating pigs one becomes like a pig. Eating cows and sheep, one becomes like a cow or a sheep, because we get their blood and flesh and everything; and it is not the nourishment we seek from animal food, but we get

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नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।

न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥६॥१६॥

something more, and put our minds on the animal plane and get animal propensities. Vegetarian food is more suitable for the practice of Yoga. But Sri Ramakrishna did not lay stress upon selection or choice of food. He said that any kind of food which suit the physical constitution of a man and is easily digested, should be taken without any prejudice.

Again, another thing must be observed for the practice of Yoga. If you are very hungry, you should not eat to the full extent, but to satisfy half of your appetite with solid food, one fourth with liquid and one fourth should be left free.² That is the way a Yogi eats. He never loads his system with too much of solid food. That kind of food which is easy for digestion, should be taken, and we can get enough of nourishment from vegetables, or from fish and other things, even if we do not eat flesh and animal food.

If we go hungry and fast, we weaken our system. A Yogi does not observe fasting too much, but eats a little at a time and keeps his system in a proper condition. If the room be very cold, then we will suffer from an attack of cold and so it will not be possible to practice Yoga, or when it is too windy or stormy, if we are in a place where we cannot control the rush of wind, and if it makes us feel uncomfortable, we should not try to concentrate or practise Yoga at that time.

These instructions should be carefully observed. We must be very cautious and should live in a cautious way and modify the conditions of our life, and try to change the whole constitution, mind, intellect, slowly and gradually, and not suddenly. If we try to introduce sudden changes that may interrupt the progress, you may get bad results. "He who is moderate in eating and in recreation, whose exertion in actions, and whose sleeping and waking are moderate, can become a Yogi and can practise Yoga, which is destructive of pain".³ The prac-

² It is said in the *Yoga-shāstra*:

अधं सव्यञ्जनाक्षयं तृतीयमुदकस्य तु ।
वायोः सञ्चरणार्थं तु चतुर्थमवशेषयेत् ॥

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥६।१७

³ The word 'दुःखहा' really connotes here the idea that practice of

tice of Yoga will destroy all pain, sorrow, suffering, physical and mental. We need not go to any doctor or physician for our health, or for nervous condition, or for mental condition, if we live according to the instructions of Yoga. But it is very difficult for those living in the city in a professional way as we do in America.⁴ Here we get air through pipes in order to have ventilation, etc. However, one should go out and take out-of-door exercise like walking, and not severe exercise, which is not good for one who practises Yoga. Hard labour is not good for a Yogi, and fresh air, sunlight, and a little endurance of heat and cold are good for him. Exertion or any work must be simple and not very heavy. One must sleep well, but not too long. One must not be wakeful, and must not meditate the whole night, and that will not be right.

If one can follow these instructions carefully, taking proper care of the body and mind, in course of time, he will be able to obtain the best results from the practice of Yoga. Some people think, if they can practise these exercises and meditate all the time, that will be good, but, under the present circumstances it will be more injurious than helpful, because we have just begun with this practice which will upset the system, and, when you are living in the world and taking care of many things and doing work for your sustenance, it will not be possible to spend the whole time in breathing exercises and concentration. Your head will then become dizzy, and you will not be able to attend to the work which is necessary for existence. So we must be very particular about these things.

Those who are not tied down with family ties, can do just as they please, and if they live in a quiet place, have a little means of their own and have not to earn their living with hard labour. But those who are working hard, should spend a little

Yoga cuts asunder the chain of *samsāra* that binds men in the den of delusion and gives pain.

⁴ It is to be noted that when Swami Abhedananda delivered lectures on the *Gita*, he lived in America.

⁵ It should be remembered in this connection that the Swami used to take the *Gita* class regularly while he was in America. Nearly every day he used to teach his disciples and students yoga practice like *āsana*, *prāṇāyama*, concentration and meditation (*dharanā* and *dhyanā*) according to strict rule of Patanjali's Yoga system. He used to teach them also the practices as have been described in the *Hathayoga-pradīpikā*, *Gheranda-saṃhitā*, etc. for their physical training.

time and take proper care of the body and physical condition. At the same time they will have to concentrate and meditate a little, and practise a little breathing exercises, and when the system is tired out, they should not practise the hard breathing exercises, but should take simpler exercises. When you come home after hard labour and mind is exhausted and physically you are not strong enough, take simple breathing and that will be enough, and, if you cannot concentrate, lie on your back and practise a little concentration, or repeat *so'ham*, or 'I am that Brahman', or think you are a Spirit with a body and take a little rest, and that is good. Get up fresh after a good sleep and go through the harder exercises in the morning, and that will be the best way. Exhaustion is not helpful for any one, and, when your system is tired out, if you try to take hard breathing exercises, it will not be easy, but you will have a head-ache and will be dizzy, etc.

Another thing is that we should learn to control our tongue, which is absolutely necessary. We should not talk too much, because it is a waste of energy. It does not do any good to the speaker, or to the listener. So we must learn not to waste our energy in unnecessary talks. Constantly, when two people meet either on a street corner, or in a parlour or anywhere, they go on talking about other persons, which is useless, and it becomes a habit. Their mind is restless and, when they come home, if they try to concentrate, it is absolutely impossible.

Those who wish to have self-control, should have control over the tongue first, and they should not waste energy in talking too much. In this way, when we get control over our body and senses, we succeed in getting control over our minds. When a person is said to be in the state of superconsciousness (*samādhi*), or in deep meditation and rests in Spirit (*Atman*) alone without longing for objects of desire, he is said to be a saint (*Sthitaprajna*).⁶

If you can sit with a mind absolutely concentrated upon the Divine *Atman*, not thinking of any worldly thoughts or things or objects of ambition, or objects of desire, then you will act like a true Yogi. Sitting in silence you must not think of any

⁶ A *Sthitaprajna* is known as a *Jivanmukta* or *Jnāni*.

objects of desire, and that would be meditation. Without longing for objects of desire, a Yogi becomes a saint. What would be the condition of mind then? "As the flame of a lamp, when it is placed in a windless spot, does not flicker, but burns steadily without flickering, even such is the likeness of a Yogi who has controlled his mind and is practising the method of uniting the self with the Supreme Spirit." Keep that example in view, then your mind will steadily rise upward in the plane of the Spirit and will not go this side or that. Your true Spirit is away above your head when you close your eyes and look upward. Below the forehead it is worldly, and when the mind is up, then you are above the world. When the mind is above the forehead, then it is above the world and is on the spiritual plane. So, like the flame of a lamp when the wind is not blowing, or when it does not flicker, is the mind of a Yogi who is in meditation upon the Supreme Spirit.⁷

When the mind runs towards the *Atman* in an unbroken flow, all thoughts, sense powers, and sense perceptions losing differentiations, mingle, and run upward in the direction of the *Atman*. What happens then? What will be the result? When the mind is not disturbed by anything either mental or through sense perception or through physical pain or suffering, the Yogi lives in the *Atman*, and rejoices in the *Atman*. When the mind is absolutely happy and contented in the state of concentration, without longing for any other kind of happiness, or pleasure, or enjoyment, the Yogi communes with the *Atman*, and in that state, he perceives an unbroken absolute peace which is realized by pure understanding, transcends the senses and does not move from the absolute Truth, the transcendental Brahman. That state of mind the Yogi always aspires after. The Yogi enjoys absolute peace, unchangeable happiness, eternal bliss, and restfulness, intellect is not asleep, and he communes with the Spirit in full understanding. Understanding is purified by Divine knowledge or realization of the Spirit or *Atman*. This is a perception which is independent of sense objects and sense powers and if you can fix your mind

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥६१९८॥

in the absolute Spirit, you will not be moved by external pain, or loss, or sorrow, or suffering.⁸

When the mind is once fixed on the absolute Truth dwelling within you, your mind will never be moved from that. At that time you will be in the state of superconsciousness, having acquired which, the Yogi regards no other acquisition superior to it. When you acquire the knowledge of union with the Spirit, you cannot think of anything superior to that, every other thing you can think of will be less, and lacking in something. But when you think of the Supreme Spirit, and

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।

योगिनो यत्चित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥६।१९

Sri Krishna is describing the *samprajnāta-samādhi* in the verses 18th and 19th. *Samprajnāta-samādhi* takes place when modifications of the mind are controlled and calm, and remain a little different from the object of meditation. *Asamprajnāta-samādhi* comes when the mind is absolutely in tune with the *Atman* and when there remains no difference between the mind which concentrates and meditates and the supreme object of meditation. *Asamprajnāta-samādhi* is known as *nirvikalpa-samādhi* i.e. perfect union of the *jīvātman* and the *Paramātman* without any difference and diversion. Sri Krishna has described, *asamprajnāta-samādhi* in the verses 6. 20-22. Madhusudana Sarasvati has mentioned in his commentary :

“एवमेकाग्रभूमौ सम्प्रज्ञातं समाधिमभिधाय निरोधभूमावसम्प्रज्ञातं समाधिं वक्तुमुपक्रमते ।”

Regarding the verse 6 19, Madhusudana Sarasvati further said :

“समाधौ निर्वृत्तिकस्य चित्तस्योपमानमाह यथेति । * * आत्मनो योगं युञ्जत इति व्याख्याने दाष्टान्तिकालाभः सर्वावस्थस्यापि चित्तस्य सर्वदात्मकारतयात्म-पदवैयर्थ्यञ्च * * ।”

So Sri Krishna says,

यत्रोपस्मते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मनं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ॥

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।

वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्ततः ॥६।२०-२१

Madhusudana Sarasvati commented :

“प्रत्यक्चैतन्यं परमात्माभिन्नं सच्चिदानन्दधनमनन्तमद्वितीयं पश्यन् वेदान्तप्रमाणजया वृत्त्या साक्षात् कुर्वन्नात्मन्येव परमानन्दधने तुष्यति, न देहेन्द्रियसंघाते, न वा तद्गोचरेऽन्यत्र ।”

you deeply meditate upon it, you will feel the absolute peace that comes in the state of *samādhi*. At that time you cannot think of anything higher or greater than eternal peace. Even the possession of the whole universe and the wealth of the world, or of prosperity, health, success in business, or anything, it will appear like the dust of the earth. Then all these things will not appear to have any value at all. That will be indispensable condition, and nothing will appear to you as greater or higher than that. You will not have to ask for an explanation as to whether it is higher or not.⁸

How can we know that we have attained to the highest state of realization? This will be seen when you have found absolute happiness, feel absolutely contented, and cannot think of anything higher or greater. That is, that highest state will come when you are no longer moved by sorrow or suffering. If any one has got into that state, he feels it, and feels that nothing can be higher than that. If his body be cut into pieces, he will not think of it, or will not try to protect himself. There is no question of self-protection there, because his self has become one with the Divine Self. That condition should one know to be what is termed a Yogi.

This is the ideal of Yoga to attain to that state of supreme Blessedness. Life is not worth-living without having that prime state. What is the use of living, having only all those worldly possessions which are temporary, and do not belong to you? Even parents and children and wives you must leave behind you. You may expect to meet them afterward, but that expectation is not worth-having when you do not know your own self. So first know who you are and where you are going. First realize that you are above and beyond this body. First think of your soul, and think what it is, and then find it out yourself in your own being. Send your intellect and understanding inward, and try to look into it, and the Spirit will reveal its true nature within yourself, and the mind will be restful and peaceful. That condition is known as Yoga.

There must be complete cessation of all contacts with pain.

* यं लब्धा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन शुष्कापि विचाल्यते ॥६॥२२

and sorrow. It should be practised with a firm faith and undeparing devotion. You must not doubt the results, and must not think you have been practising so long and cannot do it any longer. One who wishes to accomplish anything, must never encourage that kind of thought. You may not attain to it now, but, if you have patience and perseverance, you will attain to it later. Nobody can say at what time you will attain to the highest. So think of it, cling to it, and practise it faithfully and regularly with a heart full of hopes for the highest. You may not have peace here and now, but do not give up the hope. This peace will come in God's good time.

Some people get discouraged very easily, and say: "It is not necessary. I have been practising this for two or three years, let me try something else, I have not found my health in a good condition or the mind in peace. Let me try something else". That would be foolish. But a Yogi thinks in this way: "If I cannot gain any result in this life, I must not give it up, nothing will be lost. Whatever I have practised in this life, will not be lost. If this life be not fitted for that result, the next incarnation of mine may get that result". With infinite patience and perseverance, a Yogi follows the practice of Yoga step by step, never gives it up, and never despairs, and in the last, he attains to the Supreme *Atman*.

Sri Krishna instructs: "Abandoning all desires from imagination, restraining all the senses from all quarters of the mind, we should try to practise Yoga. The *braāhmisthiti* or resting on the *Atman* is known as Yoga or (*asamprajunāta*) *samadhi*."⁹ If you have not these desires fulfilled, use discrimination. If these desires be heavy and strong and act dangerously, have these desires driven out of your mind by discrimination. If you have little desires like food and clothes, have them fulfilled in some way or other. Try to find out what these mean. It may make the struggle for existence a little smoother, but you must be mindful of the highest results which will be more

तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोग-वियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।

स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥६१२३॥

संकल्पप्रभवान् कामान् त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥६१२४॥

lasting than these temporary effects of the struggle for existence. Our minds are constantly going out through the doors of senses to the external world, so their courses should be checked to a great extent. If we wish to know the true nature of our soul, we must give the whole of our mind to the Spirit, otherwise it will never be revealed. With patient attention we can accomplish the highest end: 'निश्चयेन योक्तव्यः' (६।२६)

In the study of medicine, or in learning music, or in any kind of art, you will have to devote your whole attention to the object in view. If your mind is divided or distracted, you cannot expect to be in the restful condition. So we must learn to control the mind. Whatever we wish to accomplish, we must first of all give the whole heart and soul to it, otherwise we will not reach the highest end. If one be doing a thousand things and practising music at the same time, one would not accomplish much. Think of all these great scientists, and do they think of anything else? No, they shut themselves in their room and, day after day, they spend sitting on the same chair or bench, and work until they discover or invent something. A few years ago I went to see Mr. Edison, the great scientist in East Orange. In what state did he invent those things? He sat there, his food were served and sometimes kept there for two or three days. He did not sleep. He sat there until he accomplished his end. That is the reason why he found something which astonished the world. He devoted his whole life to it. So concentration is necessary and without concentration how can we expect to be a great one. If we are not ready to devote our whole time and energy to the attainment of the blissful state, how can we get it?

Many other things we will have to do before the attainment of the highest Ideal, but, in the beginning, it cannot be done. Let us go and devote the whole energy of our soul to something great in present life and we will learn much by experiences, and get something worth-having. A Yogi gives up everything as a scientist does, and cannot do anything else. The scientists are the greatest Yogis. Edison was a Yogi, nay, all inventors are the Yogis, because they use the same power of concentration on the material plane, and get material results. When a Yogi is on the spiritual plane, he becomes a great saint, and that is the only difference between a common

worldly man and a great saint. When we devote the whole energy to the practice of music, we will become a musician. So, let us take away the same energy from the mundane world and put it on the spiritual plane, and we will become a spiritual giant and will realize the *Atman*.

So little by little, step by step, one should withdraw one's mind from other objects of ambition and desire and should fix it on the *Atman*.¹⁰ By exercising understanding he comes to know that he must learn to discriminate for finding out his ideal. The majority of people do not know what they are doing. They go about here and there, but they have not found out their ideals yet. Their intellect is impure, and so they do not know what they want. I have seen hundreds of people who think that they want something, but when I pin them down, I do not find anything they want. It is very difficult to form an ideal, and to mould our life in this way with determination and firmness. We should not waver from the ideal and even if we gain the whole world, we do not forget, but hold on to the ideal. Fixing our mind on the *Atman*, we should not think of anything else at that time. Firmness of character makes one great in the mental or in the spiritual world. The same mind is working on many planes ; with one on the mental plane, with another on the scientific plane, with another on the moral plane and still another on the spiritual plane, but the results will be different according to the planes.

A spiritual giant would not be a giant on the commercial line, because he would not care for these things. One who cares for a earthly success or prosperity, would not care for spirituality. If we go to a millionaire on Wall Street (in America) and talk in this fashion, he would think you were fit for the lunatic asylum. Even a so-called saint would send you to the lunatic asylum. So if we look at them from different standpoints, we get different experiences. It should be remembered that each one thinks his own world as the highest.

It is better to try and to find out the supreme Truth first. Very few do find it out. Those who do, are fortunate and

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शनैः शनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥६॥२५

ready for higher realization getting out of this miserable world. You may think that I am taking the side of a pessimist, but I am not. I know what optimism is and what pessimism is. This world is full of cries and misery, otherwise I should not have given it up.

A similar passage you will find in the *Upanishads*. All these verses which I am reading to you, are in perfect harmony with Raja Yoga, and they quote all the aphorisms referring to the same idea. First of all, the power of speech should be absorbed in the mind. When you do not use any words, all the power that is necessary for exercising the power of speech, will be absorbed in the mind substance, and then you may think of many things, but do not express them in words. That thinking should be absorbed in the higher knower, where the thinking man or woman should be absorbed, and that is the essence of the absolute Truth aimed at. All the best, personality should be absorbed in the universal existence which means the highest existence. You will have to mingle yourself with the Universal step by step, and then you will know what God is and in what way you are related to the Universal *Atman*.

Here is a beautiful illustration of a pot. When a potter makes a pot, the moment the pot comes out it contains the space inside, you cannot make it empty or exempt from the space or form. The inside will be filled with space, but that space can be occupied, either with water or with grain or anything else. You can make the space which is inside the pot, be filled with water or with any other substance, according to your wish, but at the same time, you cannot make it free from space. Similarly when the individual mind, or soul, or the individual ego, comes out of the Universal Spirit, it takes the shape and form of an individual, and it brings with it the knowledge in intelligence or self-consciousness. Just as a pot cannot be made free from space, so the mind or ego cannot be made free from intelligence or consciousness. The ego will not exist when intelligence or self-consciousness is gone, but that intelligence or consciousness appears to us as inseparable, because we have come out of intelligence or consciousness. Our soul is absolute intelligence and existence. So we need not fear, as some people do, that we shall lose our individuality or self, if we try to merge ourselves into the Universal Spirit. Knowledge

means that you are like a wave in the ocean of absolute intelligence, existence, and bliss.

The mind goes to different objects, and thinks of different things, but whenever something causes the wavering of the unsteady mind, the mind goes away to something else, bring it back and fix it on the *Atman* again. And it should be remembered that when your mind will be fixed on the *Atman* and be calm, and when you will absorb your separate entity into the *Atman*, you will get eternal bliss and happiness, which are the *Atman* itself.¹¹ Now, if the mind does not stay but wanders here and there, bring it back and fix it on the *Atman*. This constant struggle or effort to bring it back (*uparati*) you will have to do for a long time before you can get hold of yourself. So you need not be discouraged at all. When you have got hold of your mind and fix it on the source of the universe, you are the master of the world. It is very difficult—'*durgam' pathastat*', still we must do it, otherwise you will be miserable and unhappy all the time and you will not get peace. We would better spend our energy in trying to get hold of ourselves than to waste it in some other direction, and the result may be very far from us at present. Still it is worth-having, and when we get it, we shall be above and beyond the plane of the mundane world. So for whatever cause the wavering and unsteady mind wanders away from that, we should restrain it and bring it back into the Spirit, and fix it upon the true Self, the source of intelligence bliss and knowledge. He is intelligent Being, not with a physical form, but as One who moves the physical form and is the Divine guide and director of the physical form.

When your mind runs after any pleasure, you must exercise your discrimination and try to see pain, or trouble, or suffering, that attends it. When the mind goes to a phenomenal object, think you are birthless, though every other thing has its birth and decay. Anything that is subject to birth, must be

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यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चलमस्थिरम् ।

ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वरं नयेत् ॥

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुक्तमम् ।

उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्पम् ॥६॥२६-२७

subject to death. So you cannot possess it permanently. The phenomenal world had its birth, and, consequently, anything that is born out of it, cannot be free from death. Put that aside and out of your mind and it does not belong to you. That which is birthless and deathless, should be yours and belongs to you. So find it out.

Sometimes you will find that in trying to fix your mind on the *Atman*, mind will go to sleep, and you cannot do it. In making the effort, when you get exhausted, the mind goes to sleep, and you cannot think of anything, then what should you do? This state is known as *kasāya* or obstacle, in the philosophy. Then instead of struggling in the way of concentration, you should rise up from that state of lethargy by doing something. Read, or repeat, the name of the Lord, or practise a little breathing exercise, or read the *Bhagavad Gita*, or some other book which will help you in getting some kind of diversion, and then try again a few minutes to fix your mind. Even then if you find that your mind is distracted, bring it back again, and drive out other thoughts and ideas and, gradually you will find a kind of happiness which you never thought or dreamt of.

And that happiness comes when the soul is about to commune with the Supreme Spirit. You will enjoy that, but after that, will come other states which are still higher, but that I should not mention just now.

This is the effect that follows the right pursuit of Yoga. "The Yogi whose mind is tranquil attains to supreme peace, and to him surely comes the supreme happiness".¹² The Yogi whose passions are quieted or silenced, whose mind is tranquil, who has become one with the Absolute Spirit and who is sinless in order to attain to Divine communion. He or she who is sinful, cannot attain to it, unless he or she lives a pure life. Morality is the foundation of becoming sinless, and sinlessness is the condition of becoming a Yogi.

Thus, keeping the soul steadfast with all his senses purged of impurities, one attains with ease the absolute bliss coming in contact with the Brahman.¹³ So we will have to practise

¹² Vide *Gita*, 6.27.

¹³

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।

सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥६।२८

this, and live a pure, chaste, moral, and spiritual life. These things are necessary, nay, are essential. Some people have an idea that we can have worldly pleasures and enjoyments, and enjoy divine communion at the same time. Where there is the world or worldliness, there is no God, because God and Mammon cannot be served at the same time. Go and try, and you will find out the Truth yourself. Thus, keeping himself pure with all his senses purged, he attains with ease to absolute peace communing with the Brahman.

Here comes the Christian theology which says that you will have to become sinless by getting the help of a mediator, or Christ, otherwise you will not be saved. That is not the idea of a Yogi. He becomes sinless by leading a pure life, gaining or realizing the ideal of sinless life, and using discrimination.

An external mediator cannot do anything, if you are not willing to attain to the highest. The soul is the real meditator. Thus, with his mind concentrated by Yoga he sees the same Spirit abide in all beings and all beings abide in him. The Universal Spirit manifests through every form.

In order to realize that Universal Spirit we must first realize God in our souls, and that is the first step. Therefore, a Yogi tries to know his own relation to the universal Spirit through the practice of Yoga and, when he has accomplished that and know his true Self, he has known the *Atman* which pervades the universe, then he will understand the meaning of this expression which we so commonly use.

God is omnipresent, that is, He is present everywhere. Why do you not see Him? Because you do not have the eyes to see Him. I mean by this the spiritual eyes. These eyes come through God, because these eyes depend upon the sinless *Atman*, the eyes cannot see without the help of the *Atman*.

What help can you derive from that kind of eye which is so dependent? When the spiritual eye is opened, you can know and see the Divinity everywhere, and before that eye can be opened, you will have to sincerely practise Yoga. How does the Divine Spirit or the omnipresent Being live in the universe, or live through all living creatures? He lives as an intelligent Being, full of peace and as the essence of existence. That Being is the Soul of our souls and Life of our lives. These are

mere words now, but you will be able to understand the meanings when you realize yourself i.e. when you know who you are and what you are.

Sri Krishna says: "He who sees me as the Universal Spirit everywhere and sees everything in me, does not lose me, nor do I lose him".¹⁴ If a Yogi can see the Divine Spirit everywhere, he can never be separated from that Spirit, and the Spirit will never vanish from him, or be away from him, but he would be in constant communion with the Spirit. Sri Krishna when speaks, he speaks of himself as the Divine Spirit, which is one with the Supreme Being.

"He who is intent on unity, worships me as residing in all beings, whatever his mode of life may be, that Yogi dwells in

¹⁴

सर्वभूस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।

तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥६।२९-६०

Sankara said that these two verses, 29 and 30, are the instance of समदर्शन । Sankara said :

"सर्वेषु ब्रह्मादिस्थावरान्तेषु विषयेषु सर्वभूतेषु समं निर्विशेषं ब्रह्मात्मैकतुविषयं दर्शनं ज्ञानं यत्न, स सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ।"

The word समदर्शन वा समदर्शी connotes the idea of ज्ञान वा ज्ञानी=आत्म-ज्ञानी । Madhusudana Sarasvati discussed this verse in a very beautiful way. He quoted the sayings of Vashistadeva :

द्वौ क्रमौ चित्तनाशस्य योगो ज्ञानश्च राघव ।

योगो चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधश्च ज्ञानं सम्यगवेक्षणम् ॥

* * एकोऽसम्प्रज्ञातसमाधिः । सम्प्रज्ञातसमाधौ हि आत्मैकाकारवृत्तिप्रवाहयुक्त-मन्तकरणसत्त्वं साक्षिणानुभूयते । निरुद्धसर्ववृत्तिकन्तूपशान्ततृप्तानुभूयत इति विशेषः । द्वितीयस्तु साक्षिणि कल्पितं साक्ष्यमनृततृप्तान्नास्त्येव साक्ष्येव तु परमार्थसत्यं केवलो विद्यते इति विचारः ।"

The Yogis follow the first method for attaining to God-realization, but the Jnanis and the followers of Acharya Sankara follow the way of *jnāna-vichāra* for Divine realization.

me".¹⁵ He dwells in God always, whatever his mode of life may be. He may be a broker, or a clerk, or a printer, or a physician, or he may have any other profession and may be engaged in any kind of work he likes, but he always dwells in God. An external mode of living will not affect one who has attained to that supreme state. So, first you try to know God, then come to the world, if you so desire.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "Try to know God first and you will know everything afterwards. Two men went to a garden and one man began to count the mangoes and other fruits, trees—the orange trees, the apple trees, and all kinds of trees in that orchard. The other man was different. He went to the owner of the garden and orchard, and made his acquaintance and asked him how many trees there were in that orchard. Then he sat under a mango tree and began to pick mangoes and eat them with great pleasure, when the other man was wasting his energy in counting the trees. We are like the one counting the trees; we just want to have this experience and that, and know how things are happening in the world. Why do we not seek the acquaintance of the Divine Maker? We

¹⁵ सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकतमास्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥६।३१

This verse is meant for the identification of *tam* (*jiva*) and *tat* (Brahman). This is the state of perfect *aparokshānubhūti* (the realization of the absolute Brahman). While explaining this verse 6.31, Madhusudana Sarasvati said:

“एवं तम्-पदार्थं तत्-पदार्थश्च शुद्धं निरूप्य तत्तमसीति वाक्यार्थं निरूपयति सर्वभूतस्थितमिति । * * घटाकाशो महाकाश इत्यत्रैवोपाधिभेदनिराकरणेन निश्चयेन यो भजति अहं ब्रह्मास्मीति वेदान्तवाक्येन तत्तत्साक्षात्कारेणापरोक्षीकरोति सोऽविद्यातत्कार्यानिवृत्त्या जीवन्मुक्तः कृतकृत्य एव भवति ।* * तस्य मोक्षं प्रतिनास्ति प्रतिबन्धशङ्का ।”

The *Gita* does not make any distinction between a true Yogi and a true Jnāni, and in the verses 1 and 2: “स सन्न्यासी च योगी” and “यं सन्न्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव”, Sri Krishna has clarified the position of the *Gita*. But, from the view-point of strict logic, say the non-dualistic Vedantists, the path of Yoga is different from that of Jnana. Vide also *Vedantasutra*, II. 1.

are not doing the right thing trying to know the world first. We can never know the world first, because our intellect is short-sighted. Our senses are delusive, and, consequently, they delude us, so how can you expect to know everything? He who wishes to know everything, should go to the Divine Maker first. He who is being intent on unity, worships me residing in all beings. The best form of worship is to see God in all living creatures and to recognise his existence everywhere, and no other form of worship can be higher than that. Sitting in a corner and learning to pray are not worship. A Yogi who does not go to a temple, but sees the Divinity everywhere, is the greatest devotee that can be. "He who has been in communion with God, sees the same Spirit everywhere; it may bring pleasure or pain, but he is deemed the highest Yogi."¹⁶

He is the foundation of that ethical or golden rule. First of all, you must learn that whatever is unpleasant to you, is unpleasant to everyone; what you do not like, others do not like, so, if you do not like anything, do not do that to any other person. What you like, let other persons have it. Therefore, a Yogi never injures any one. He never hates any one, but, on the contrary, he tries to help every one. Under all circumstances, his intention is to help and to love every one, because he feels that the people are mostly self-deluded; they do not understand what they are doing.

The world is just like an insane asylum, and the Yogi tries to help them without injuring any one, and never does anything that will bring unhappiness to the world. That kind of

¹⁶ आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा सुखं स योगो परमो मनः ॥६।३२

Madhusudana Sarasvati said:

“तस्मादुपपन्नमेतत् तत्तज्ज्ञानाभ्यासेन मनोनाशाभ्यासेन वासनाक्षयाभ्यासेन च रागद्वेषशून्यतया यः स्वपरसुखदुःखादिषु समदृष्टिः स परमो योगी मतो यस्तु विषमदृष्टिः स तत्तज्ज्ञानवानप्यपरमो योगीति ।”

A man is really great, or is called a great Yogi, who feels pleasure and pain—joy and suffering of other being as his own, and this may be called a divine sympathy for all beings of the world, irrespective of caste, creed and colour.

Yoga is the highest. So if we wish to be the highest Yogi, we must first learn what is best for our souls. Find that out. We must know first our own souls and what is helpful to the knowledge of our own souls and what brings peace in our souls and, having found that peace and happiness, we should go to the world and give it to the people at large. Otherwise, we have no right to give anything to the world, because we ourselves are beggars.

If you have not known your true Self, how can you open the eyes of others? If you have not known God, how can you lead others to God? It would be just like the fools who think of themselves as very wise and try to go round and preach to others, but those who follow their instructions, both the preacher and the followers, fall into the ditch just like the blind led by the blind. —‘अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः’ So, he is the real teacher who is a realized soul and knows and feels what he is talking about, and others are only groping in the dark. Find out such a teacher who has known or realized the Truth. If you cannot find him at hand, go and search, and the world is vast enough. You may find some one in some corner of the world, and there follow the instruction of such a one, and that great soul will open your eyes and lead you to the path which will bring the highest happiness and peace, even in this life.

CHAPTER XXV

PRACTICE AND DISPASSION ARE NECESSARY

It should be remembered that in the sixth chapter of the *Bhaagavad Gita* we have been discussing the Jnana Yoga or the path of discrimination and knowledge. It is the method of attaining the highest realization of oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Spirit, the *Atman*. It is also known as the Raja Yoga, the path of meditation. Those who have read Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*, would understand what is meant by it. Raja Yoga is a scientific method by which one can gain control over mind and mental faculties and sense powers.

It is a most important thing for every individual to gain self-control i.e. control over the mind. Our minds are constantly running outside of our bodies to external objects, and are always addicted to sense-pleasure, and so we are far off from the immortal and eternal *Atman*.¹ In this world of delusion we are constantly thinking of external objects, and so those which concern ourselves, those which are related to our bodies, and those which give us comforts and pleasures of life, are attached to them constantly. Every individual, whether man or woman or child, is attached to these enchanting external objects and we cannot help it. When we were born on this earth, we brought with us that tendency (*samskara*) and that tendency keeps us down to this transitory material plane. But there is another tendency in the soul which is innate and may not be visible or perceptible and may not be found by ordinary mortals living on the sense plane, but still the higher tendency is latent, and this higher tendency is to rise above this sense plane and go to the source of our real existence.

The soul is never contented with external objects which are transitory or ephemeral and last only for a few days or months. The soul is not satisfied with this material form which we struggle so hard to keep in good health and for which we do

everything. This body is not the thing which the soul longs for, on the contrary, the time comes when we realize that this body is the greatest obstacle in the path of spiritual attainment. The body is imperfect, and is full of disease and decay, but the soul who resides in the body, is immortal

The material body is a limitation of the soul, as it keeps him tied down to the material plane. If we once begin to get a glimpse of our higher nature, or Divine Self, we feel that this material body is the greatest bondage on this earth. Now the question is as to how can we get out of this bondage? And that longing for freedom from this bondage of body and everything mental and physical does not come to the soul which has not experienced the necessary suffering, sorrow, tribulation, and pain of this life. They are the greatest teachers that we have in this life, and without their help no one can rise above the material plane. As light of the day is not appreciable without darkness of the night, as light is valueless without shade, so real and permanent happiness is not appreciable without the feeling of sorrow or suffering. So, if there were no misery, sorrow, and suffering, we would remain on this material plane like animals without caring for anything higher and without longing for immortality, peace, and perpetual happiness. Then we would be like animals groping in the darkness of ignorance, not knowing what we are doing, where we are going, why this life is on this earth, why we struggle for existence, and why we live and do all these things. But if we had no attachment to the body, the temporary pleasures would not appeal to our souls, and when we wake up from this sleep of self-delusion that makes the soul one with the body, then we come to see the light which illumines the real nature of things and makes us feel that we are not one with the body. So everything concerning the body, falls behind, and out of the shell of this physical form, the immortal soul comes out like a beautiful butterfly which cuts the cocoon woven about it.

A silk-worm builds its own cocoon and there it is imprisoned. The time comes when it gains the power of cutting and gets out of it, and then it comes out as a beautiful butterfly. So the human soul at present is imprisoned in the cocoon of this physical form, and feels imprisoned, unhappy, and miserable, but when the latent higher tendency of the soul is roused,

the soul struggles hard to get out of this prison, and the wings of wisdom and divine love begin to grow and the soul flies away above the mundane world, and soars high in the atmosphere of spiritual space and comes to the throne of the Supreme *Atman*, and enjoys eternal bliss and celestial peace.

The *Gita* has been teaching us these truths, but they will not appeal to one whose soul is not awakened and has not got blow after blow of experience, pain, sorrow, and suffering. We must not shrink from them, but, on the contrary, we must be bold enough to face them and get the best out of them.

But the natural tendency of the mind is to be restless and distracted by different things, and as long as our minds are restless, we cannot attain to concentration and meditation, or to peace or happiness or higher illumination. When the waters of the lake are disturbed by the wind, the reflection of the moon is not perfect, and is broken to pieces. Then we cannot see the perfect reflection of the full moon although shining overhead, but when the wind subsides and the ripples and waves are subdued and the surface is calm and tranquil, the reflection is perfect. Similarly, when the waves of the mind are disturbed by desires and lower propensities, we cannot expect to have the reflection of the Divine Being on that disturbed surface. So we must try first of all to quiet the mind and to make the winds of desire subdued for the time being, if we wish to attain to higher realization.

All the various branches of Yoga teach the methods by which we can get that tranquil peace of mind, and then everything comes as a natural sequence to it. Now after hearing all the descriptions of Yoga i.e. Raja Yoga and those others, Arjuna asks this question ; "In this Yoga which leads to the realization of the absolute Spirit abiding everywhere, I do not see the steady continuance because of the restlessness of the mind".² He feels that his mind is restless and he cannot see the absolute

अर्जुन उवाच

योऽयं योगस्तथा प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलतां स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥६॥३३

spiritual sameness in all living creatures and all inanimate objects. The same eternal and all-pervading Being dwells everywhere, but we cannot realize Him, because our minds are restless, and as long as that restlessness of mind remains, it will never bring us permanent peace or happiness for which every individual soul is longing. That happiness we can never obtain by enjoying earthly objects, and that is a well-known fact. If we could have had it through enjoying earthly objects, we would have had it long ago. The soul which has had longing for the attainment of that everlasting peace, should struggle first to attain to the peaceful and tranquil state of mind through the practice of Yoga.

Arjuna further says: "Oh, Krishna, the mind verily is restless, turbulent, strong, and obstinate ; to restrain it is as difficult as to overcome the course of the wind. The wind is blowing and it is extremely difficult to keep it out and to overcome its course".³ It is really too difficult to overcome the course of the mind running in all directions everywhere, seeking pleasures and enjoyments. Even when we try to do it, the resistance brings out the power and latent strength of the mind, and the obstinacy strengthens, and it becomes more restless, just as when a stream is running down the mountain with tremendous force, it often finds a barrier, and gathers its strength, and breaks down the barrier, and flows with a rapidity a hundred times stronger than it was before. So when we put an obstacle in the path of the mind which is running in all directions, we find that the mind gets strength, and, in the end, it breaks down the barriers, and gets free. So only a few of the many who have tried to control strength, turbulence, and power, and natural tendencies of the mind, have succeeded.

You have heard of the word, 'Krishna' comes from the root verb 'to scrape' (*krishna*). He who scrapes away the sins of the individual soul, is called Krishna. He removes all the imperfections of his devotees and worshippers. The word Krishna does not therefore mean any particular form or being,

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम्
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् । ॥६॥३४

but the Universal Spirit which is the Saviour of all souls. The *Gita* says that the same Universal Spirit manifesting in the form of an *Avatara*, is also called Krishna.

The mind is the ruler of the body and senses, nay, it is the ruler of the whole phenomenal world, and so Vashisthadeva said in *Vashistha-Ramayana*: '*mano hi jagatm katri*', and so when you have any physical complaint, the mind is the cause of it. External causes will not produce any effect on the body, if the mind is strong enough to overcome this weakness, but when the mind is weak, we get the effects, and then any slight disturbance will upset us. We cannot plan the environments, but we can plan our own mental condition. We plan ourselves, and find the cause of all the sufferings, both physical and mental, and the cause is mostly mental weakness. When the mind becomes disturbed, can you imagine what results will follow? The results will be terrible. The whole physical system will be upset and the senses will run in different directions like mad elephants unrestrained.

But when that mind is kept under the control of the will of the individual soul, then there reigns peace. Then strength, courage, devotion, wisdom, higher knowledge, divine love, and everything, which are good, manifest through that individual. It is, indeed, very difficult to bring the mind under restraint. Ordinary people who have never tried to control the mind, do not feel it, but those who have tried to sit in meditation for five minutes, will realize that it is a tremendous task, and those so-called seekers after peace have given it up in despair, because they are too weak to continue that process. They find there it is as difficult as to remove a mountain from its place.

What makes the mind so disturbed and restless? An infinite number of desires disturb our mind. Can you count how many desires you have fulfilled from your childhood, and as long as you live, how many will come? Do you ever think about it, whether they are increasing or decreasing? Really we never think of it. All the individuals of the world are running in one direction and we are following them, one after the other, like sheep. These desires should be curbed by discrimination, by comparing the effects, and by watching the results, which we have already obtained and which other people i.e. our friends and neighbours have obtained in trying to fulfil

their desires. We must compare them, keeping a constant watch over our own minds. We must study our own character, see the sufferings, and try to correct ourselves. We should never forget this study, or put it aside even for a second. He who studies his own character, becomes in the end the master of himself, and rises above all earthly miseries and desires, and lives like a god on this earth. And those who are practising Yoga and taking lessons in breathing exercises and self-control and concentration and meditation, should study their own minds, and see whether their desires increase or decrease. They generally increase a thousand times in a second, and we must keep a constant watch over their progress. If we let them run, we cannot control them.

A student of Yoga and also seeker after Truth should always endeavour to keep constant watch over his mind and try to decrease these desires. If you let them run and do not restrain them, the result will be very miserable. This illustration is very good. To curb the course of the wind is difficult, but to restrain the course of desires, ambitions, and natural tendencies is more difficult and, as it is more difficult, we should struggle harder. He who has conquered his mind, is the conquerer of the universe, because he is divine, but the conquerer of a nation or a country is the slave of ambition and desires. Napoleon Bonaparte was not the conquerer of the world, but he was the slave of his ambition. Therefore, he should not be the ideal of any individual who is struggling to be the master of himself, or of the world. A real Yogi, living under a tree, or in a cave, is the master of himself. He has no selfish desire; he is the lord of the universe. Even Alexander the Great, when he went to India, seeing such a man (a saint) under a tree, bowed at his feet, and worshipped him as a living god.

That should be our ideal. The man who is free from all desires anxieties, suffering, and misery, although his body may suffer, is mentally strong and his soul has overcome the mundane existence. Such a man should be our ideal. Hearing these questions, Krishna says: "Undoubtedly it is hard to restrain the mind, because it is restless. It is hard to watch this restless mind, there is no doubt about it, but still there are means by which this turbulent and obstinate strong mind can be brought under control". What are these means? Sri

Krishna describes: "By repeated practice and dispassion."⁴ These are the two ways. We must make a constant effort to control the mind and never leave that struggle, even for a second. There must be a constant struggle to keep that mind under control. And one should always exercise dispassion. One should always remember that these things of the world are temporary, that they are not everlasting, and that you cannot carry them with you after the death of the body. Never forget it. Whenever you have extreme enjoyment and pleasure of life, remember it is temporary. Remember that it is only for a short time. That which will kill all attachments is the secret of practice of dispassion. You should never long for anything. The soul does not want that which lasts only for a second, but it is longing for that which lasts forever. But it cannot get it, if it is deluded and enjoys these things which are temporary.⁵

श्रीभगवानुवाच

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कोन्तेय वैराग्येन च गृह्यते ॥६।३५

⁵ The verse 6.35 was elaborately explained by Madhusudana Sarasvati. Sankara explained *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* as:

‘अभ्यासो नाम चित्तभूमौ कल्याणित् समानप्रत्ययावृत्तिश्चित्तस्य । वैराग्यं नाम दृष्टादृष्टभोगेषु दोषदर्शनाभ्यासाद् वैतृष्णं * * १’

Madhusudana Sarasvati said as regards repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) and dispassion (*vairāgya*):

“अत्र द्वावेवोपायौ पर्यवसितौ प्राणस्पन्दनिरोधार्थमभ्यासः, वासनापरित्यागार्थञ्च वैराग्यमिति । * * अतएव भगवान् पतञ्जलिरसूत्रयं ‘अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः’ इति । * * तदुक्तं योगभाष्ये: चित्तनदी नामोभयतोवाहिनी वहति कल्याणाय वहति पापाय च । तत्र या क्लेशप्रसङ्गा विवेकनिम्ना सा कल्याणवहा या त्विवेकनिम्ना संसारप्रसङ्गा सा पापवहा । तत्र वैराग्येण विषयस्रोतः स्थलीक्रियते । विवेकदर्शनाभ्यासेन च कल्याणस्रोत उद्भाव्यते मृत्युमयाधीनश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः इति ।”

Madhusudana Sarasvati quoted the sayings of Vashistha :

उपविश्योपविश्यैव चित्तज्ञेन मुहुर्मुहुः ।

न शक्यते मनो जेतुं विना युक्तिमनिन्दिताम् ॥

That is the greatest delusion, and the majority of men and women in every country are labouring under that self-delusion, forgetting the temporariness of earthly pleasures and comforts. They try to think that those things will last forever, even after death of the body. They long to have those pleasures continued, and even in heaven, they expect to enjoy those pleasures. What is the ideal of different nations of the world? It is to have the best pleasures that they can think of, and they create a realm where they imagine they would get all those pleasures without pain or suffering. They discard all that is unpleasant, and take all that is pleasant, as if it were possible for a human being to get pleasure without misery. One cannot feel happy if one has never suffered any kind of pain or unhappiness. So celestial happiness would never be of any value to one who has never suffered.

Practice (*abhyāsa*) is necessary, and dispassion (*vairāgya*) too. These two are the means by which the mind can be brought under control. When the mind runs in one direction, look at it, compare it with the ideal, and try to feel that it is not the thing you want, but it is temporary only for a few second, and it may last for two or twentyfive years or for one thousand years. It should be remembered that one thousand

अङ्कुशेन विना मत्तो या दुष्टमतङ्गजः ।
 अध्यात्मविद्याधिगमः साधुसङ्गम एव च ॥
 वासनासंपरित्यागः प्राणस्पन्दनिरोधनम् ।
 एतास्ता युक्तयः पुष्टाः सन्ति चित्तजये किल ।
 सनीषु युक्तिष्वेताषु हटान्नियमन्ति ये ।
 चेतस्ते दीपमुत्सृज्य विनिघ्नन्ति तमोऽङ्गनैः ॥

So there are two methods, क्रमनिग्रह and अध्यात्मविद्याधिगम । Patanjali explained *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* as :

(a) 'तत्र स्थितौ यत्नोऽभ्यासः' and (b) 'दृष्टानुश्रविकविषयवितृष्णत्ववशीकारसंज्ञा वैराग्यम्' ।

However, Madhusudana Sarasvati summarised the entire discussion as :

“सम्प्रज्ञातसमाधिपाटवेन गुणत्रयात्मकात् प्रधानाद्विविक्तस्य पुरुषस्य ख्यातिः साक्षात्कार उपपद्यते ततश्चाशेषगुणत्रयव्यवहारेषु वैतृष्यं यद्वति तत्परं श्रेष्ठं फलभूतं वैराग्यम् । तत्परिपाकनिमित्ताच्च चित्तोपशमपरिपाकादविलम्बेन केवल्यमिति ।”

years when compared with eternity, is nothing but just like a flash of lightening. So a seeker after Truth will never put his mind even upon celestial happiness which may last for a cycle, or for millions of years, perhaps. He knows even that will come to an end, and anything that will come to an end, does not appeal to such a soul longing for eternal happiness and bliss.

Again there are two processes by which the mind can be brought under control, one is the sudden effort, and the other is a gradual effort, which is slow but sure. The sudden effort is rather violent. However, you will have to control all the senses and sense-powers, and to curb them, and direct their course toward the *Atman*. But it is a very difficult task. In doing it, there are some who do succeed, and get the result right away. But that is not the path of the majority of people. There are some who, born with tremendous power of dispassion and discrimination, can do it like Gautama Buddha, who left his palace, pomp, wife, child, and everything. Buddha considered them as a bondage and so he went forth like a beggar from a palace having full of luxuries and comforts. He went forth, and tried to bring the mind under his control, and he succeeded, and afterward became a Saviour of mankind. He was the one who started a religion whose followers outnumber those of any other religion, and he showed the path to permanent peace and happiness, even in this mundane life.

We must exercise judgement in trying to control our minds. As a mad elephant can be slowly brought under the control of the elephant-keeper, so this mad mind can be brought under control by proper discrimination, exercising proper judgement and trying to make a slow, gradual, and steady progress.⁶ The first method of this gradual process of bringing the mind under control is through right discrimination of the real from the unreal, the eternal from the non-eternal, the spirit from matter, and the soul from the body, etc. (*nityānitya-vastu-viveka*) and that right discrimination is the greatest help in human life. One who has not got that kind of discrimination, is the most miserable creature, and one who cannot keep that discriminative faculty prominent at every moment of his life, should go

⁶ This example has also been quoted by Madhusudana Sarasvati in the commentary on the *Gita*.

and learn it from the wise ones who have gained such a control and have such discrimination. That would be the method for those who are weak-minded and cannot keep their souls before the minds constantly. Living in this whirlpool of the world and with anxiety and worry, we naturally forget it. When we are hard-pressed with environments, we cannot remember it. Therefore, it is necessary to go to the wise ones at intervals and to be instructed by them, and feel the atmosphere around them to gain strength from that atmosphere. That is done in India. How far it is done in this country (America), I do not know, but, in India, we generally do that.

There are sages and saints in India who live in secluded places out of worldliness. We go to them, and sit at their feet, and learn the methods, and get help in keeping the ideals before our minds. Just as when a fire is burning, it needs to be poked once in a while with a rod in order to keep the fire alive. So the fire of discrimination which is getting cold and is going to die, you must keep it alive by the society of the wise ones. But if one has vanity and is self-satisfied, he is not inclined to seek the company of the wise. You will find very few will acknowledge their own weaknesses, because they think they are the best and the wisest. They think they know everything and do not need any help from anybody.

If that kind of people wish to attain to the higher realization after gaining self-control, and if they cannot practise discrimination, they should try to get rid of their desires in some way or other. So find out these desires and do not follow them, but just curb them. If they cannot do that, they should practise the breathing exercises, (*prāṇāyāma*), because breath is a physical and tangible something which you can get hold of. If you cannot get hold of your mind, you can get hold of the breath very easily and when the breath is under control, the mind is under control also.

Breathing exercise (*prāṇāyāma*) is good for and helpful to those who want to get hold of the tangible substance and control the mental power. Desires of the mind and irregular breathing go hand in hand. When our breath is not under control, we have also all kinds of disease. Those who have been practising breathing exercises, will find that when their mind is disturbed by desires, they can bring their mind under

control by rythmical deep breathing. The mental condition will then be different, and this is no exercise of the imagination. You will not have to exercise the imagination to find the result. You can experience it in your own self. So go through the regular practice of breathing exercises with the other steps of Raja Yoga, and can easily attain to the control of the mind and of the senses and desires.

There are other methods like devotional exercises, etc., which will help others who are emotional, or who believe in God or have faith in God. When Sri Krishna said one should practise, that practice included all the various methods of Raja Yoga, the eight steps (*Astanga-Yoga*). When he spoke of dispassion, this included renunciation of all the attachment to the objects of senses. Yoga is hard to be attained by one who is not self-controlled, says Sri Krishna, but one who is self-controlled and strives and endeavours to practise constantly, can attain to it, can control the mind, and attain to *samadhi*.⁷ These means and methods are given in the Raja Yoga and in the *Gita*..

We may pray to God for help, but, at the same time, we must not forget 'Heaven helps those who help themselves'. We must, at first, try to exercise our own efforts as we can, and for rest we may depend upon the higher ideal and higher powers, and for that we can pray to God. God does not help from outside, but strengthens our own powers when we are steadily exercising these powers in a certain direction. If we have faith in God and in the teacher and also in the ideal, that faith will strengthen our powers and, when the mental powers are strengthened, we will be able to attain to better results in the end.

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः

वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥६।३६

That is, Sri Krishna says that who has controlled his mind and has dissolved his mind into the fathomless ocean of the *Atman*, he attains the *asamprajnāta-samādhi*, which is desirable for the Yogis. Sankarananda Sarasvati quoted a parallel verse from a scripture:

मनसो वृत्तिशून्यस्य निर्विकारात्मना स्थितिः ।

असम्प्रज्ञातनामासौ समाधिर्योगिनां प्रियः ॥

You must not forget the ideals of your life. Very few of those ideals are on the highest plane. Every one has an ideal, but that ideal is not the same as the highest ideal of all religions, and, therefore, you must struggle in the first place to form your ideal and think of that ideal as divine and not as a creation of your own imagination. It may be a creation of your imagination in the beginning, but when you begin to think of it as a part of the Divine Being, then you will know that the Divine Being is all-pervading and is the foundation of all ideals and of all forms and all thoughts. That ideal, which has been formed and created in your own mind, will lead you to the highest goal, and that will be, of course, if you have that tendency or desire for the highest goal. But if you have not that desire for the highest goal, you will never attain to it.

The first sign of the attainment of perfection is to have the desire for it, just as, if you have a desire for money, you struggle for it and ultimately you get it. If you have a desire for clothes, you get them. If you have no desire for the realization, for the bringing of the mind under control, or for the attainment of peace and absolute emancipation of the soul from the bondages of the body and everything, you cannot get it. You will have to come to this earth again and again in order to have your desires fulfilled; or you may go to any other plane of existence and fortunately you may get favourable conditions and environments. You will then have the little desires fulfilled and have a little peace, otherwise you will have to reap the results of your own acts which you have been doing through ignorance.

When our spiritual eyes are open and have got a little glimpse of this ideal and the things beyond this world, then we make the best use of our present opportunity and try to advance as far as we can by exercising all the best powers which we possess in that direction. There will be no danger in struggling in that direction, because, as far as we can advance in this life, so far is our gain, and nothing will be lost. One who renounces everything in this world, may be looked upon by the world as a loser. But he is not lost, he is the greatest gainer. He may appear to be a loser in a worldly sense, but he is a gainer spiritually. He is a gainer according to the highest ideal of all religions. Therefore the

opinion of the world we should not count much, because they are living on a different plane of existence, which has nothing to do with the seeker after God.

One who follows the opinion of the worldly people whose ideals are different, cannot expect to rise above their plane. Therefore, a student of Yoga, or a follower of the instructions of the great spiritual leaders like Christ, Buddha, Krishna, and other great ones, who have appeared in different countries in different times, should always remember that the opinion of the world will never bring salvation to their souls. The world may think that you are fit for the Insane Asylum, but the wise ones will think that those who are madly rushing after wealth and ambition, are fit for the Insane Asylum. To the eyes of the wise ones, the whole world is nothing but an Insane Asylum. Some are mad after wealth and fortune, and others are mad after husbands, wives, children, etc. So it is much better to be mad after God. I would rather be mad after God twenty thousand times than to be mad after objects of ambition, because one never becomes mad from seeking for one who is the only sane Being in the universe. Therefore, those who are far from Him, are insane. Therefore we must try our best to follow God and love God. We must try to follow the path of the great ones with all our strength and try to control our minds for getting permanent peace and happiness even in this life.

CHAPTER XXVI

A YOGI IS NEVER LOST

Sri Krishna says: "O Arjuna, this Yoga (Raja Yoga) leads to the realization of the absolute Spirit everywhere. I do not see that steady continuance in you, because of the restlessness of your mind". Arjuna felt the tremendous power which the mind possesses. We know how difficult it is to control our mind. He who can control the mind, is the conqueror of the world. Really the conquerors of the mind is the controller of the world and all the students who have been practising Raja Yoga, have already noticed how difficult it is to check the mad rush of our minds toward the objects of senses and without controlling our minds we cannot accomplish that Divine realization and cannot enter that state of realization which is described as the highest Ideal of the Vedanta philosophy. He also says: "Restless our mind is, turbulent, strong and obstinate, It is as difficult to check as the course of the wind".¹ As it is difficult to check the course of the strong wind, so it is extremely difficult to check the mind whose nature is restless, turbulent, and obstinate. The mind is restless, because the various impressions that are in our minds, constantly bubble up and produce new desires making us go headlong toward the fulfilment of our selfish desires and gradually we become slaves to those desires and also to that which arouses those desires. When this process is continuously going on within us, we can understand the restless condition of our mind. The mind is obstinate because of the long standing habit of the mind. 'Obstinate' is not the strongest expression, but we may call it most stubborn. Habit is nothing but a series of impressions that we have derived from the continuous performance of certain acts. We know how one impression is strong and how it causes us to do the same thing over again. When a drunkard once drinks, he wishes to drink again, and if he continues in this way, after a few years he will not be able to resist it.

¹ Vide the *Gita*, 6.35.

All our habits we have acquired through our continuous performance of the same thing over and over again, and, therefore, it has become unavoidable and indestructible, as it were, and for that reason it is still more difficult to control the mind. So Sri Krishna answers: "Undoubtedly O Arjuna, it is hard to restrain the restless mind, but it can be accomplished through practice (*abhyāsa*) and dispassion (*vairāgya*)—

‘मनो दुर्निमहं चलम्, अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते’ (६।३५)।

Practice and dispassion are the two antidotes of the Yogis for the turbulent and obstinate mind. As I have already explained that practice or habit is nothing but a series of impressions gathered from the performance of the same act for a long time, but in order to counteract that habit, we should practise just in the opposite direction. We should develop a counter-habit. Waldo Emerson says that a habit can be overcome by a counter-habit. If we have a strong tendency in one direction, we would be able to overcome it by developing the opposite tendency in an opposite direction, and that is what is meant here by practice i.e. the turning of the same idea of that one act in an opposite direction. If our mind has become restless, we must try constantly to concentrate it and make it steady in one particular idea or object or thought, and if we fail, we must keep it up and continue to do it. We may fail once or twice or twenty times or one hundred times, but still we should not give up our effort.

Those who have been practising concentration, find that their mind wanders away and they cannot hold it to one particular object for any length of time. But they should keep it up and struggle hard with a firm determination until it is accomplished.

There are two kinds of restraint which come to the students of Yoga. Among the two kinds, one is by force, and the other is by gradual practice. The sudden control is not desirable. You may stop your mind and fix it with tremendous force on an object for a certain length of time, but, in the reaction, your physical and mental conditions may become worse. If you are not physically strong enough, you may go through nervous prostration when the reaction comes and suffer. People who have no director or guide or teacher, have ruined themselves by

trying to control their mind all of a sudden. I have met some people in this country (America), who have tried to make their mind free from all ideas to make it absolutely negative, and have at last ruined themselves. So the gradual control is more desirable, healthy, and helpful.

But here you will notice, as Sankara in his commentary says that the mind has a very close relation to breath, and so here comes the necessity of breathing exercises (*pranayama*). Whenever you notice that your mind is well-concentrated, you will find that your breath is very slow, and you can hardly be conscious of your breathing process. So there is a close relation between mind and breath. The mind is like the rider and breath is like the horse upon which the mind rides. If the mind stops, the horse also will stop, and conversely. When the breathing is under control, the mind also is under control. So there comes the necessity for breathing exercises which are already given in the Raja Yoga and other books, and I have also explained the relation between breath and mind in my lecture on the 'Science of Breath' in *How to Be a Yogi*.

This river of our mind can flow toward our own prosperity and good, and also it can flow toward our own adversity and evil i.e. it can be turned in any way. When this river is filled with the water of worldly desires, it leads to adversity, sorrow, misery, and death, but when this river is filled with the water of discrimination, it leads to virtue, right knowledge, spirituality, truth, and to the attainment of Godconsciousness. Through the practice of dispassion (*vairagya* or *anasakti*) this knowledge can be acquired. But proper discrimination and dispassion are the two things necessary to right knowledge. Let us discriminate the right from the wrong—the eternal from the non-eternal, and after discriminating (*viveka*), we should reject that which we do not want, and that is the process of dispassion or *vairagya*. We should renounce the non-eternal and leave it aside and take our minds from it, because we do not want it. When we understand the real nature of this worldliness and the world and when we know the temporary and ephemeral character of this *maya* or worldliness, we cannot like it, but we like to avoid it, if we are the real seekers after Truth. And under these circumstances we should take our minds off from that which is non-eternal, from that which is material, and fix it on

the eternal and indestructible. So there comes the necessity for the practice of dispassion or renunciation. Renunciation is absolutely necessary for the spiritual life.

The old saying that a man cannot serve God and mammon at the same time is absolutely true. In India, where I lived as a Sannyasin and lived sometimes in caves and sometimes under trees, I did not realize the forces i.e. attraction of the world but coming here to this country (America) and mixing constantly with different kinds of worldly people I feel the force, and I learn why it is difficult for them to fix their minds on something higher. A business life which is constantly attached to those things of the world, produces a very strong tie which is difficult to cut, therefore those who wish to attain to some kind of higher knowledge, must renounce something which turns down the mind.

The word 'renounce' is a very unfortunate word. It produces a kind of thrill and dread and fear in the minds of the hearers. But still it is the best word that we have. We must renounce that which is evil and that which makes us unhappy. That which keeps us away from the attainment of Godconsciousness, should be given up, and then we will be able to control our mind. The mind runs towards a certain object, and it is very pleasant to see or hear or enjoy. But withdraw your mind from that instantly, and fix it upon something which is not so pleasant at present, but which will be pleasant in the long run. We try to find immediate results, and that hope leads us to great difficulty. We are very sceptical about our future condition and the things which we do not perceive with our senses, because we are so attached to our sense perceptions that we are not ready to sacrifice these absolutely pleasant things and enjoyments for the sake of that which is far away from us and which we do not know whether it is true or not. But, in India, we sacrifice the present enjoyments for the attainment of that which is far from us, because we live in eternity and not in the present life. We consider that our present life is only the resultant of our past, and the future one will be the resultant of the present, and considering the future, we try to live in such a way as will be pleasant in the end, and not merely pleasant at present.

Now let me tell you, in this connection, about the life and nature of the Charvakas, the disciples of Vrihaspati. The

Charvakas are out-and-out materialists and sceptics and they never believe in God, or in any other gods. They admit only the direct perception (*pratyaksha-pramana*) because they hold that the objects which are not perceived or revealed by senses, are unreal and non-existent. They believe that spirit is produced from matter, and the *Atman* is the by-product of the material organs, or the secretion of the bile. They do not believe in any heaven or heavenly pleasures, and hold that with the dissolution of the material body, the life-force or *Atman* dies. They love their bodies and so they nourish them and enjoy them. They do not believe in any virtue (*punya*) or vice (*papa*). They reject the idea that actions produces results, and so they believe that when they cheat any one, there originates no vice. Ethical sense is meaningless to them, and their prime aim is to enjoy everything in this phenomenal world. In this country (in America), I have found many persons who live their lives like the Charvakas of ancient India. Here, in the West, most of the people, except the eminent thinkers, philosophers and men of saintly character, are addicted to pomp, wealth and, worldly pleasures, and they believe that in the last day of judgement the results of their works will be judged, and then will either be rewarded or punished, or they will either be sent to eternal heaven, or to eternal hell. To them I say to follow the teachings of Sri Krishna, the Divine Incarnation of God. They should practise Yoga, or believe in the ideal of Yoga, which will help them to lead their life in right way and to get real happiness which will not be lost with the death of the material body. The teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* are sublime, and those who follow those synthetic teachings, get the means to uplift their lives and to make their lives blissful even in this world of sorrows and sufferings. The *Gita* was translated by the Western savants and most of the poets, philosophers and mystics were inspired with the sublime teachings of the *Gita*.

I have already explained that the natural tendency of the mind is restless. It is like the current of the river that constantly flows. Its nature is like that of a monkey who is restless. And so it is very difficult to ordinarily check it, or to control it. Sri Krishna has said that it is not so difficult to control if we take the help of practice and dispassion. *Abhyasa* and *vairagya* are two things which can control the mad rush of the mind and can

make the mind to concentrate and meditate upon the Supreme Spirit or *Atman*, which is the source of intelligent, consciousness and bliss. Arjuna also failed to control his mind and also failed to determine what is right and what is wrong. Sri Krishna, his friend and teacher, restored his consciousness and told him to practise self-control. Thus we find that Arjuna says to Sri Krishna: "It seems to me that the attainment of Yoga, or the realization of the absolute Truth, which is the ideal of Yoga, is hard to be attained by those who are not self-controlled." ² Therefore the first thing that is necessary for the student is the practice of self-control, because the mind is very unsteady and divergent, so it is difficult to control and to make it one-pointed. So it will be your duty that when anybody speaks against you or insults you, instead of taking instant revenge, you will have to hold yourself calm, and send blessings. If passion makes you mad, restrain it, do not give in to that passion but keep it under your control, be master of it, and be not a slave to passion, and this method is known as self-control. If you have a strong ambition, do not be a slave to such an ambition, but let the ambition be your slave i.e. let the ambition be under your control, and wait for the proper method or way until you have accomplished your end in a calm serene way without being agitated or disturbed by that passion or ambition. But those who are self-controlled, can attain to the highest realization by proper means.

Now what are the proper means? By this we understand that first thing is self-conviction or self-confidence. It is not far from us, and we must practise discrimination and determination etc. By this proper means we gradually come to the restraint of our minds and then we can fix the mind upon the most abstract object. We can withdraw it from external material conditions and fix it gradually upon our true Self or *Atman*, when we can understand and appreciate the relation which our true self bears to the Universal Spirit. At present we do not know anything about the Universal Spirit, the *Atman*. We have heard from our childhood that there is such a thing as God, and we have

योऽयं योगस्तथा प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं न प्रश्यामि चञ्चलतात् स्थितिं स्थियाम् ॥६।३३

used the words 'omnipotent' and 'omnipresent', but these are merely words and we do not feel them, but Vedanta tells us to be conscious of the meaning of these words. When we use the word 'omnipotent', we should feel it, should be conscious of it, and should understand it. When we use the word 'omnipresent', we should understand the real meaning of it and not the dictionary meaning, what is this that can be called 'omnipresent' etc.

But we are conscious of the same omnipotent and omnipresent substance which is related to us as our *Atman*, which is our true self. This is the first thing that we are conscious of. In fact, our consciousness depends upon our true self. Our consciousness is inseparable from our true self. We are sitting here and listening or talking, but at the same time, we are conscious of them, and if we were not conscious, the cells composing our bodies were not in good condition. Still we could not have realized anything, and Vedanta tries to take us to the source of this self-consciousness. Where does this proceed from? That causation has been asked over and over again. The source of self-consciousness, or intelligence, or existence, is that one substance which is called by different names in different countries, and which is called in Vedanta Brahman, Sat-Chit-Ananda. Intelligence, existence and blissful state of the absolute happiness is our true self, the *Atman*. Therefore, when we have known our true self, we have known everything of the universe. 'एकस्मिन् विज्ञाते सर्वविज्ञानं भवति'।

Then we have known the Reality of the universe. We have known God and his relation to our souls. So, how important it is for a student of Vedanta to fix his mind upon his true self. We should, therefore, realize the relation which it bears to the omnipotent Spirit. Instead of letting our minds go after the phantoms of hope and ambition we should try to understand the background of these phantoms, the background or substance out of which the phantoms of hope and ambition are made, and that background or substance is eternal, unchangeable, and one.

Arjuna asks this question: There are many Yogis and many are struggling hard for this realization of the ultimate Truth, but they cannot attain to it right away. Some do attain, others do not. What becomes of those who do not attain to

this realization, and what becomes of them after death? What condition does he obtain who, being imbued with faith, has failed to subdue himself. What becomes of him in the end? Someone, practising the various methods of Yoga, has faith, but has not been able to gain absolute control over his mind and has not reached the state of perfection. I trust he does not perish, falling like a riven cloud and being without support and deluded in the path of the Brahman. Arjuna gives this illustration of the cloud. Being unsupported, the cloud becomes thinner and thinner, and disappears in the atmosphere. So does a Yogi who is a practising Yoga, having renounced everything, and without being able to attain to perfection, melt away, disappear, and is he destroyed in the end, after the death of the body? What becomes of his soul? He who has renounced all the fruits of his good works, will not be able to go to heaven, which is the realm where people go to enjoy the results of their good works. Having renounced the fruits of those good works and having been deluded from the path of absolute truth and having fallen from it, would he be destroyed, or annihilated? Such was Arjuna's question. So he has further said: "O Krishna, do thou remove this doubt of mine completely, for there is no other than thyself who can possibly destroy this doubt of mine, I do not see any one who can answer my question. This is the most difficult of all questions, what becomes of such a soul. Do thou, O Lord, destroy this doubt of mine completely."³

अर्जुन उवाच

अयति : श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥

कश्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।

अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।

त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥६।३७-३९

In the verse 6.38, there are mentioned two paths, work and meditation. Madhusudana Sarasvati mentioned about *devayāna* and *pitriyāna* :

‘देवलोकमनुभवत्यर्चिरादिमार्गेण, नापि केवलकर्मफलं पितृलोकमनुभवति धूममार्गेण

Being asked by Arjuna Sri Krishna answers: "O Arjuna, such a Yogi has no destruction, either in this world, or in the next. None verily who does good, ever comes to grief or destruction; he who has once been on the path of righteousness, is never destroyed".⁴ In the first place, you will know that

(vide commentary on the verse 6.37). Arjuna has asked Sri Krishna about the condition of a *yogabhrasta* yogi i.e. a yogi who gives up both *karma* and *upāsana* and becomes confounded, so that his attainment of God-consciousness remains doubtful. In this verse the doctrine of *jñāna-karma-samucchaya* has been refuted. The theory of *jñāna-karma-samucchaya* expounds that perfection or *mukti* is accomplished by *jñāna-vichāra*, accompanied by *karma*, i.e. by the performance of selfless and *ishvarārpana karmas*, the mind is purified, and as a result of the purification of the mind, *jñāna-vichāra* i.e. *sadasat-jñāna-vichara* originates and the *jñāna-vichāra* helps men to remove ignorance or *maya* and to realize the all-consciousness Brahman. And from this it is understood that perfection or *mukti* is achieved through the practice of *jñāna* or *vichāra*, which is aided by *nishkāma* (selfless) *karma* that causes the purification of the mind. But, while commenting on the verse 2-18, Madhusudana Sarasvati said: "कश्चित् तु एतस्मादेव विधेमोक्षे ज्ञानकर्मणोः समुच्चय इति प्रलपति ; तन्न, युध्यस्वेत्यतो मोक्षस्य ज्ञानकर्मसमुच्चयसाध्यत्वाप्रतोतेः ।"

While commenting on the verse 2.10 (of the *Gita*), Sankara said: "अथ न ते तत्त्वविद ईश्वरसमर्पितेन कर्मणा साधनभूतेन संसिद्धिं सत्त्वशुद्धिं ज्ञानोत्पत्तिरक्षणं वा * * । तस्माद्गीतासु केवलादेव तत्त्वज्ञानान्मोक्षप्राप्तिः, न कर्मसमुच्चितादिति निश्चितोऽर्थः * * ।"

Anandagiri made explicit this idea of impossibility of *jñāna-karma-samucchaya*, when he said: "समुच्चयपक्षे प्रश्नप्रतिवचनयोरसम्भवात् नेद गीताशास्त्रं तत्परमित्युपसंहरति—तस्मादिति । विशुद्धब्रह्मात्मज्ञानं स्वफलसिद्धौ न सहकारिसापेक्षम् अज्ञाननिवृत्तिफलत्वाद्रजताजिततत्त्वज्ञानवत् * * । कर्मणा चित्तशुद्धिद्वारा ज्ञानहेतुत्वमित्युक्तोऽर्थः वाक्यशेषं प्रमाणयति—एतमेवेति । * * स्वकर्मानुष्ठानात् ईश्वरप्रसादद्वारा ज्ञाननिष्ठायोग्यता लभ्यते ; ततो ज्ञाननिष्ठया मुक्तिस्तेन न साक्षात् कर्मणा मुक्तिहेतुता * * । तत्त्वज्ञानमेव केवलं कंवत्यसाधनमिति च सर्वत्र विगीतम् ; * * ।"

So, according to the *Bhagavad Gita*, discrimination, or *jñāna-vichāra* or *shravana-manana-nidhidhyāsana* is the only means to removing the nescience (*ajñāna* or *maya*) and to simultaneously attain to Self-realization (*ātma-jñāna* or *moksha*).

श्रीभगवानुवाच

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।

अ हि कल्याणकृत् कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥६।४०

Vedanta does not believe in the absolute destruction of anything. Absolute destruction or annihilation both to Vedanta philosophers and to the modern scientists, is impossible, and nothing can be absolutely destroyed. Destruction means reversal to its causal state and the Sankhya philosophers explained it long before the Christian era. The destruction of a Yogi's reality, his true nature and his knowledge etc., is meant here as has been explained in the Sankhya: Having attained to the regions of the righteous and having resided there for an indefinite period of time, *karmamargi* Yogi comes back to this earth, and is born again in a fortunate prosperous family. This is for those who are fallen from the path of Yoga. Those who have been practising hard with firm faith and determination and have not reached the highest perfection, Godconsciousness, may go to the regions of the righteous, or to the heavens (*svarga-loka*) There are many heavens described in the Vedas, and the *karmamargi* Yogis may go there and stay there for thousands or millions of years and afterward, when that time has expired, they will come back and be born again upon this earth⁵ in the family of a poor or prosperous parents. This includes both material and spiritual prosperity. In Vedanta, heavens are admitted. The dualistic Vedantists believe in going to heaven but with this difference. The heavens are not eternal in the sense that the Christians believe. The Christians believe that if you once go to heaven, you go there, but do not progress, but always sing the praises of the Lord, but, in Vedanta, you go there and stay for a certain length of time, enjoy the results of your good works and after that time go to another place, or go on to some other heaven, or come down again in this plane. Then the heavens are not considered to be the most desirable place. Those who have fallen in the path of Yoga, are born in pure and prosperous families for getting chance to struggle hard to reach the ultimate goal of life.

This may produce the the idea in some minds that all those born in prosperous families, must have been Yogis in some

Anandagiri said: “योगिनो मार्गद्वयाद्विभ्रष्टस्य ऐहिको नाशः शिष्टगर्हालक्षणो न भवतीति श्रद्धादेः सद्भावात् * * । न गच्छति कुतश्चिन्तां गतिं कल्याणकरत्वादिति नाशाभावः ।”

⁵

‘क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विव्रन्ति ।’

other incarnation, but this may not be true. It may be their first chance of becoming pure. It may be that some who have performed good works and have produced good without becoming a Yogi, have become pure in thought, and have attained to prosperity as the result of their good works, but they might not have been Yogis. Or such Yogis who have fallen from the path of Godconsciousness, may be born in the families of Yogis who are wise and have attained a certain state of realization, but this kind of birth is very difficult to attain to on this earth.⁶ It is not an easy thing to be born of such parents who are absolutely devoted to the ultimate Truth, live a chaste life and do not do any harm to any one either physically, mentally or intellectually, and who always worship and revere the Highest and have extreme desire for the ultimate realization of truth. Such parents are very rare to get. Ordinarily we come i.e. are born according to our desires. We are born also under the circumstances where we can only fulfil a certain amount of our desires, and these desires are ordinarily mixed with good and evil; and for that reason it is very difficult to find people absolutely pure, good, and righteous. There may be exceptions, but these are rare indeed. Here you will notice that the idea of reincarnation has been strongly supported. A Yogi may be born of Yogi parents, or of parents rich in spiritual wealth, and this birth means a continuation or remanifestation of the same self in a human form, and this is what is meant by reincarnation. It is not merely transmigration, and that idea is different. There is a difference between transmigration, as it is ordinarily understood, and reincarnation.

The idea of transmigration is that a soul gets out of one body and gets into another body. Plato believed in that kind of transmigration. Plato believed that the soul gets out of a human body and goes into an animal body, or the body is made before the soul takes possession of it. It is just like the possession of a house where you go in and take possession, and

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।

एतद्धि दुर्लभतरंलोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥६।४१-४२

say, 'this is my home'. That idea is very strong in the doctrine of transmigration. What reincarnation means, is that it manufactures a body out of its desires and tendencies. The soul manufactures a body, and it is the process of evolution and not obsession. Vedanta advocates the idea of reincarnation, and not transmigration.

When there is only one source of everything and if the soul is the source of all conditions, forces, and matters, then it can manufacture bodies according to its desires and tendencies. That idea is strong in Vedanta. The individual soul passes away after the dissolution of the gross body i.e. after death, and takes with it a subtle body or form, and that subtle form may be compared to a germ of life and its finer materials and particles of matter. Its mental powers, thinking powers, and intellectual powers are contracted into one germ state, and it remains in that state until it takes another grosser form or material form. When it goes to some other realm, it takes a form suited to that realm, and it manufactures a body suitable to the conditions of that planet or realm. We must not think that the conditions which prevail upon this earth, are universal. If there be inhabitants in the sun or moon or Jupiter, their conditions would not be like ours. If this earth becomes too cold or too hot, these human forms would not be suited to the changed conditions, but some other animal forms suited to these conditions would thrive and not these delicate human bodies.

So this subtle body continues to exist, and it is the cause of some other grosser form, and it comes through the channel of the parents' bodies, and there is the form of a child. Parents are not the creators of the souls, but merely the channels. Weissman and other German scholars and scientists say that this germ of life came from the common stock, and parents are merely the channels. It is almost the same idea, only they do not believe in reincarnation, and do not call it reincarnation.

Those who have fallen from the path of absolute realization, may continue to exist in some heaven in a certain form and, after the expiration of that time, they take subtle bodies and come back to this earth and be born again according to their desires and tendencies. Desires are the principal factors which determine our birth. Like attracts like. We are born

under such conditions and environments, because we deserve them, we are attracted toward them. This birth is determined by the law of causation, and you deserve what you have got and I deserve what I have got. We ourselves are responsible for our taking birth; our desires and tendencies have made us what we are today and in future if we deserve something different, we shall get it, no one can keep us from it.

If a Yogi has fallen, it is because his desires are not fulfilled. Some more experiences are necessary for him. The Yogi has not fallen forever. He will rise up again. He will be born on account of his tendencies unfulfilled, which he could not destroy by his will-power, and which he could not remove from his soul life. In this incarnation, when he is born of Yogi parents what would he do? The knowledge which he acquired in his previous body, he does not forget, but he comes with that knowledge into this world. A genius is not made, but is born.

There have been many instances in this world of born wise men. They have shown marvelous powers. They are prodigies like Mozart and others. In this incarnation, he has the knowledge which he acquired in his previous body, and he will not have to go back and begin over again, but he will start from just the point where he left before. Beginning from that point he will go on farther until he reaches the goal. So you see how helpful this idea is that, if in this incarnation you have not succeeded in attaining to the highest goal, you need not despair. That much you have gained in this life, and what you have not gained, you will gain in future. No one who does good ever, comes to destruction. If you have failed in the path of Yoga, you will never come to grief, if your desires are earnest and sincere. Yoga is only for those who are sincere and earnest. It is not a very discouraging thing that, if we cannot get to the highest point in this life, we will get it in the next, or will get it some day. But we should struggle hard to get it in this incarnation and, after hard struggle and constant efforts if we fail, who is to blame? We are not to blame. We are not to be blamed surely, because we have tried our best. We could not do better than what we did, and if we gain more power, we will go still further on.

Prepared by the previous tendencies, as it were, we are forced into the practice of Yoga. If we are born again, being

a Yogi in the previous life, the practice which we had gone through in the previous incarnation, will force us to take it up again unconsciously, as it were. I have known some cases where from the childhood they loved to be Yogis. They would associate with the Yogis and take their instructions. Their parents were not necessarily Yogis. How do you account for that?

It is a kind of remembrance. It is an unconscious mental activity which brings up the previous practice into play and makes the whole life and soul turned in that direction. Propelled by the previous tendencies, as it were, he is forced into the practice of Yoga, and then he continues with greater effort and firmer determination and stronger will-power, and then he succeeds. Such a man supersedes those who are engaged merely in performing the rituals prescribed in the scriptures.

A philanthropist is doing good works, and deserves praise and reaps the good results of his works. A man who is performing all the ceremonials, is making a good *karma*, but a Yogi who has fallen from the path of the highest than the ethical or virtuous man, is performing ritualistic works, prescribed in the scriptures, because the former seeks the highest and does not care to reap the results of his good works which are within the wheel of action and reaction. He wishes to attain to that absolute freedom, which is called *moksa*.

There may be some obstruction. If you have committed something wicked in this incarnation and have not reaped the results, you may have to reap the result in the next incarnation. The wheel of *karma* is as inexorable as may be. We cannot avoid it. We are bound hand and foot, and are tied down by the chain of action and reaction—cause and sequence. He is a true Yogi who has become free from that chain. He is a *Jivanmukta* living in this material body, he has become absolutely free and liberated. It is very rare to find such a man who is one of the ideals of Vedanta. A Yogi who is strong in perseverance and is purified, free, and perfected, in the course of many births, reaches the supreme goal. He is "a Yogi who strives with perseverance and is purified from sins". The purification from sins is necessary, and if you have committed wicked acts, you will have to reap the results, and that may be one of the obstacles. When that obstacle is removed, you may become pure again. Or he may remain impure for a long time, but that

impurity will be washed off, and you will become pure. It is only the mind that makes you impure and makes you act like an evil dissolute man. But the true nature, the *Atman*, is absolutely pure. That impurity will come out sooner or later. Those who are impure and living a wrong kind of life, need not fear; it is only for a certain experience. To live an impure life will lead to some results which are not desirable. As long as they long for their experience, they will have to go through it. There will come a time when they will get rid of it and long for something better and higher, and then will be the time when the purification of the soul will come.

After many births one is supposed to attain to perfection. We cannot attain to it in one birth and, therefore, the theory of a single birth is untenable in any way, because the object of life is not fulfilled. If we try to accomplish something in this life, and that life is cut short, we do not succeed.

"A true Yogi is superior to a man of austerity. He is also greater than a man of book-learning knowledge. He is greater also than those who perform good works. Therefore, O Arjuna, become a Yogi. Of all Yogis, he who so full of faith, worships me with his inner self, and abiding in me, is deemed and is regarded by me as most devout and the greatest Yogi".⁷

तत्र तं बुद्धिर्योगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।
 यतते च ततो मूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥
 पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव हियते ह्यवनोऽपि सः ।
 जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥
 प्रयत्नाद् यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धिक्लिषः ।
 अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥
 तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
 कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद् योगी भवार्जुन ॥
 योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमोमतः ॥६॥४३-४७

Sri Krishna says that a Yogi (true Yogi) is superior to a *tapasvi* or saint who has dedicated his life to penance. He is also superior to Jnani and Karmi, because a Yogi remains always absorbed in the Brahman-knowledge, and then there remain no action, and religious duty whatsoever.

Here you see Bhakti Yoga is extolled again. A true Yogi will become a true Bhakta in the end, and he cannot help it. Those who are wise and have renounced everything and have become absolutely unselfish, cannot help loving the Supreme Deity, because He alone is lovable. He is nothing else but love. A Yogi becomes a lover of God in the end. As my master Sri Ramakrishna said: "Pure love and pure knowledge are one and the same". When you have attained to the highest wisdom, you will have highest devotion, and when you have highest devotion, you must have highest wisdom, because love is God and God is love. God is wisdom and wisdom is God. So if one be a true Yogi, he will be in the end a true Bhakta and Jnani, but Sri Ramakrishna extols *bhakti* and *prema* highly, because they are closest to God, and are the means of the highest Yoga.

CHAPTER XXVII

GOD IS IN EVERYTHING AND EVERYWHERE

Here begins the seventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the first to six chapters, we find the explanation of our true nature of the Divinity within us. In the next six chapters i.e. from the chapters seventh to twelveth, we shall find the description of *Isvara* or God, the Lord of the universe, and how to worship that Supreme Deity, and what relation we bear to that Supreme One. Gradually we will understand this, and in the last six chapters that relation will be established. We have already explained the last verse of the sixth chapter which reads thus: "Of all the Yogis again, who faithfully worships me with his inner Self abiding in me, him do I regard as the most devout and the highest one", says Sri Krishna¹ Here Sri Krishna sows the germ of Bhakti Yoga, which he is going to explain in the next six chapters. "Of all the Yogis, Karma Yogi, Jnana Yogi, Hatha Yogi and others, the Bhakti Yogi is so full of faith that he worships me (here Sri Krishna takes his stand as one with the Incarnations of the Supreme Deity, or it can be said that Sri Krishna points out the *Atman*) with his whole self abiding in me".² Again and again I have said that when a great sage or Incarnation speaks of himself in the first person, he neither uses these terms in their ordinary sense, nor as ordinary mortals refer to themselves in their physical form or the human nature. The sages and saints, and Incarnations of God, always spoke of themselves as the immortal, unchangeable, and everlasting Spirit or *Atman*. Here we find the difficulty amongst the

¹ योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥६।४७

²

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।

असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥७।१

Christians and the Christian theologians when they try to explain the teachings of Christ. When Christ said, 'follow me', he never meant any particular human being. Similarly when Sri Krishna said, 'Follow, and worship me', he did not mean any particular mortal or individual, but he meant the everlasting Spirit, or the Supreme *Atman*, and the Hindus and students of Vedanta understand this well, and they understand never one for another. They always are careful in understanding the spirit of the sayings of the great ones.

"Him do I regard as the most devout and the highest Yogi who has faith, and who can love the Almighty Spirit with his whole heart and soul." In the beginning of the seventh chapter Sri Krishna says: 'Having their whole heart and soul intent on me, practising Bhakti Yoga, and finding refuge in me, thou canst know me in full and with certitude'. In the last verse of the last chapter, he has further said: "Him do I regard as the most devout and highest Yogi", and further he says: "If a Bhakta, or true devotee, or sincere worshipper, of the Lord, has his heart and soul intent on the Supreme Deity, and if he practises Bhakti Yoga and holds Him as his refuge, then he knows the true nature of the Divinity in full, without any doubt or suspicion; doubts would never rise in his mind, and he would know the true nature of the Divinity." Now that can be known that he is going to explain in the first few verses of this chapter.

Here you will specially notice one remark made by Sri Krishna: "Having thy whole heart and soul intent on me". I was reading the translation of a commentary in regard to this observation. It has been beautifully explained there, and I will read to you what it means. It means 'such a devotee or worshipper whose mind is in a friendly spirit, set on my divinity; so much is he attached to me, and so impartially doth he love me that if he should ever happen to be separated from me even for a moment, or should chance to suspend his thoughts for a moment from musing on me attributes and doings, or should by chance forget for a moment to think of the magnificence of my divine state, that would suffice to impair his very existence'³

³ Though Swamiji translated the commentary of Sankara in some

That kind of devotion is necessary. *Bhakti* is a constant remembrance of the Blessed One with intense love. Constant remembrance may be through fear, but that would not be *bhakti*. You may have been taught from your childhood to worship God through fear, but when you worship God through love, that is different. Some of the Western scholars like Tylor, Cloud, Frazer and others have tried to give explanation that out of fear men worship God, the Supreme Ruler. But that is not correct. All men worship God really through love and devotion, and not out of fear. In your religion, Christianity, which is supposed to be the religion of love and is preached as such, the central idea is fear i.e. fear of punishment, but where there is true love, there cannot be any fear. You try to worship God through love and at the same time fear Him, these two things cannot exist at the same time and in the same place. Where true love is manifested, there cannot be any expression of fear. A true devotee has no fear, because he loves God. And how could he fear his Beloved? That is impossible even in ordinary human love. When a man and woman are in love with each other, all signs of fear vanish and disappear. They do not fear the parents, the relatives, and also the opinion of the public or friends, but they rush and get intoxicated, as it were, by drinking the wine of that extreme love. So how could it be possible for a devotee to have fear in his mind when that love is manifested? Echart, Plotinus and other German, English and Spanish mystics have also

different way, yet the purport and essence remain the same. The commentary of Sankara runs thus :

“मयि वक्ष्यमाणविशेषेण परमेश्वरे आसक्तं मनो यस्य स मय्यासक्तमनाः, हे पार्थ, योगं युजन् मनःसमाधानं कुर्वन् मदाश्रयः अहमेव परमेश्वर आश्रयो यस्य स मदाश्रयः । यो हि कश्चित् पुरुषार्थेन केनचिदर्था भवति, स तत्साधनं कर्म * * 'किञ्चिदाश्रयं प्रतिपद्यते, हित्वा अन्य साधनान्तरं मय्येवासक्तमना भवति । यस्तुमेवंभूतः सन् असंशयं समग्रं समस्तं विभूतिवल्गुशक्तैश्वर्यादिगुणसम्पन्नं मां यथा येन प्रकारेण ज्ञास्यसि संशयमन्तरेण एवमेव भगवानिति तत् शृणु उच्यमानं मया ।”

Note the words ‘मय्यासक्तः’, ‘अहमेव’, ‘मदाश्रयः’, ‘मामेव’, ‘मां’, ‘मया’, which have been used by Sri Krishna, and these words refer to the Supreme Reality, the *Atman*

admitted that devotees worship God through their intense love. The Sufis also admit it.

In the Bhakti Yoga, you will find that a true devotee should worship God through love alone, and not through fear. Narada and Sandilya have said that true devotion or *bhakti* (*parānurakti*) is that constant remembrance of the Supreme Deity through love, and not through fear, and where that sort of devotion is manifested in the heart and soul of the individual, he cannot forget his soul-beloved one. The true devotee is one who has fallen in love with God. The Sufis also say that to fall in love with the beloved God is the easiest way to forget every other things, just as a lover would do in his case. So when Sri Krishna says, 'you will have to have your whole heart and soul fixed on me and then you can never forget me for a second, and if you should forget you, impair your very existence', he means to say that, that state of mind is the highest expression of real *bhakti*. Such a lover of God can know God in full. Such a lover makes him absorbed in the ocean of all-love God.

When you try to know the Divinity intellectually, you can get only a partial apprehension of God, and not in full. Intellectual apprehension is a partial flash of the Divinity and not true realization. Realization, in the true sense, can come through love alone. Therefore, Sri Ramakrishna used to say that intellectual apprehension is just like the strangers who enter the outer apartments only, and true love is like the medium whereby one can come to the inner apartments and know everything.⁴ Therefore, through true or pure love for the Supreme Deity alone one can understand the true nature of the Divinity in full and not through knowledge or intellectual apprehension; because when you understand the nature and meaning of love and will know that love means the feeling of oneness, you become one with the thing loved for the time being. Love means that attraction (*anurāga* or *anurakti*) which

⁴ ज्ञान (विचार-बुद्धि) मुक्तिर द्वार (बहिराङ्गन वा उठोन) पर्यन्त येते पारे,
किन्तु भक्ति (वा प्रेम) मुक्तिर अन्दरमहल पर्यन्त याय—Vide the *Kathāmrita*.

But, in other places, Sri Ramakrishna said that real knowledge (*shuddha-jñāna*) and real devotion (*shuddhā-bhakti*) are one and the same.

brings two souls together and makes the two into one. The same force of attraction works on the subtle plane, and like creates familiarity, and when that is manifested between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, that is the highest expression of love, and that will make the individual soul one with the Universal Spirit, and, consequently, there will be no necessity for discussion or discrimination. Where there is only discussion, there cannot be knowledge in full. He will be able to know all the divine qualities and powers, and realize the infinite greatness of the Supreme Being and 'taking refuge in me', means whenever you are in distress or trouble, God is the only Being you can go to and that means taking refuge in the Lord.

You may try with all efforts, mental and physical, to get something which you are longing for, but when you cannot get it, you come to the Supreme Deity and pray to Him and ask for His grace, and thus your desire becomes fulfilled. That is what is meant here by the expression 'taking' refuge in me'. Sri Krishna says: "I shall fully declare to them that when wisdom is accompanied by realization, there shall remain nothing else in the world to be known".⁵ His promise to declare that knowledge is accompanied by realization and not merely the knowledge, such as we get by reading books, is higher. That may produce some effects, but when that is attended by realization (*anubhuti*), that becomes the part and parcel of our souls, and then all questions vanish and all answers are obtained too. That kind of realization is connected with Divine

⁵ ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज् ज्ञातव्यमशिष्यते ॥७२

similarly it is found in the *Upanishad* :

(क) एकस्मिन् विज्ञाने सर्वविज्ञानं भवति ;

(ख) कस्मिन् नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति (मुण्डक १।१।३) ;

(ग) येन अश्रुतं श्रुतं भवति, अमृतं मतम्, अविज्ञातम् विज्ञातम्

(छान्दोग्य ६।१।३) ।

Really Self-consciousness (*brahma-vijnāna*) is the source and fountain-head of all phenomenal knowledge, and when that supreme knowledge is attended, all other knowledge are fulfilled.

wisdom, and that Divine wisdom is such as 'knowing it there shall remain nothing else in the world to be known—'यज्ञज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज् ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते'। Can you imagine such a knowledge? There is one (universal) knowledge the attainment of which will include all other knowledge and no other desires will arise to know anything else

If we know God in full, we shall have a portion of His omniscience and become omniscient, and that is the only way to become omniscient. By studying philosophy we take it piecemeal. We take a certain portion of phenomena and study it partially as far as our sense-perceptions and mental capacities will allow, but we know that we are limited and leave out many things and cannot grasp many things because of our inability and limitation. But when these limitations are done away with and broken away, then we are free and, if we try to know all the phenomena, that cannot be done in full, unless we realize the true nature of the Supreme Deity and attain to that highest wisdom, omniscience⁶ The reading of philosophy produces a kind of knowledge and intellectual grasp or understanding of a thing, but it does not become a part of the soul.

You have heard the words 'omnipotent', 'omniscient' 'infinite', etc., but the meaning of these words have not become a part of your soul yet. You have learned only the dictionary meaning by heart, but that is not realization. When you feel that which is infinite and yourself is a part of the Infinite, you have realized and not until then. And then there will be no questioning in your mind whether you are a part of the Infinite or not. It is settled once for all. But this knowledge is not very easy to acquire. How difficult it is to arrive at that wisdom in which all other kinds of wisdom are included. It may be explained thus. It is very difficult, because among thousands one perchance strives for perfection; there are thousands and millions of people out of which you will find very few who strive for perfection, the rest have no time to think of it, they are occupied with business affairs and little things which are the most important things of their lives, and they are

⁶ 'When God-realization comes, we know everything (of the world) and nothing remains unknown' means we know or realize the basic knowledge which saturates all kinds of knowledge, and that basic or ground knowledge is the one universal and unique Brahman-knowledge.

ready to sacrifice their souls for such things. It is their nature and tendency; they cannot help it, and you cannot make them do otherwise. It takes time, and no one can help it.

Therefore, says Sri Krishna: "Among thousands, a few only strive for perfection and among these very few know me in truth, in my absolute sense, me as I am".⁷ There are many of them who strive and some of them may become perfect. Still, we will have to know what kind of perfection is that. Those who are perfect in a certain way, may not be perfect in full. A man may be perfect morally, but spiritually may not be perfect. This does not mean moral perfection. It is said that, after striving through incarnation after incarnation, one is born with that tendency from his childhood. When you see a person striving for perfection, that effort is manifested in his early age, although his parents and grand-parents and all the rest of his ancestors may be worldly. You must remember that person has brought with him that tendency as the result of his previous efforts in the same line.

In this way through various incarnations and by constant effort we create a desire for perfection, i.e. for attaining to the Highest. Money, or social position, is not the Highest. We will have to learn what really is the Highest. By striving through many incarnations, by constant effort, and by constant learning which is real and which is unreal, and which is eternal and which non-eternal, one gets that tendency, and by exercising that tendency he reasons properly, and gradually he begins to realize that which is the eternal and true, and unchangeable and immortal Spirit, as distinguished from that which is non-eternal, changeable and mortal; and then he may remain in that intellectual grasp for some time. There may be other barriers in his path of realization, and until these barriers are removed, he will not be perfect in the highest sense. Therefore, it is said that 'even among those who strive and are perfect, only a few know me in truth'. Now he describes that knowledge.

Vedanta philosophy is based upon the doctrine of evolution. Vedanta philosophy has borrowed the scientific theory of

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद् यनति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मा वेत्ति तत्ततः ॥७॥३

evolution of the Sankhya philosophy though it knew the doctrine of evolution as expounded in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. So this doctrine is not new to a student of Vedanta, because it has been known in India many centuries before Christ was born. The whole system of Raja Yoga is also based upon the evolution theory. The Sankhya system of Kapila in a logical and scientific way has treated this evolutionary cosmological theory. Vedanta has accepted that theory, and Sri Krishna is the spiritual teacher for explaining that theory. We do not have to leave out the evolutionary theory, or to change the meaning of the text. All these great scientists and philosophers admit the first cause of matter, that is, matter in its causal state, and call it *Prakriti*, which is the same as Latin *Procreatrix*, the primordial energy. That is Nature, and from that Nature proceeds the ether, then proceed that which is gaseous, and that which is liquid, and from that all other kinds of organized matter have evolved. These are the principal steps of evolution, and this has been the foundations of the religions of India. This evolution theory was discovered long ago before the birth of Darwin.

In India, scientists and philosophers knew that all these earth and water and what we call material things are made of molecules, and molecules are made up of atoms⁸. This atomic theory is very old. Two atoms make a molecule. The finest particle of matter you may only imagine, and you cannot see it. You take a piece of stone or earth and divide and subdivide it until you come to a point when you cannot perceive it with your senses. You may use an instrument, but finally you come to a point when you cannot perceive it with the most particular or delicate instrument. You cannot perceive anything smaller or finer. Kanada in his Vaisheshika philosophy has elaborately discussed this subject.

The philosophers of India believe in many kinds of atoms, solid, liquid, and gaseous. These atoms i.e. finer states of atoms are called elements, and those elements were known. The ancient Hindu scientists did not know the 74,015 elements, which you know now. There is a tendency to make these elements increase in number, but the standard of the Hindu scientists was the five sense perceptions. They tried to analyse

⁸ Molecule is known as *dvyanuka* and atom as *anu* in Indian terms.

the external objects and reduce them to five states of our sense perceptions which are feeling, sound, odour, taste, and touch, and I think that is the best standard, because however fine a thing may be, you will have to perceive it with the five senses. So if we divide and analyse the external objects by that standard, then it is quite easy.

There are eight different things of this material nature which are the cause of the material forms: first, the solid, second, the liquid, third, the gaseous, fourth, the elements of heat and fire, fifth, the elements of ether, sixth, the thought power or force, seventh, the reasoning, and eighth, the egoism. Those eight make up the external or gross physical and mental phenomenal world (*Prakṛti*). These eight include other states like sense power etc.⁹ In the Sankhya philosophy, we find twentyfour different elements (*chaturvīmśaṭi tattva*), and these are mentioned in the Raja Yoga and other books on the Sankhya philosophy.

How do these finer elements get together? Now, what we call subject to sense-perception, is only the gross manifestation of something that is finer. The same force manifests through different stages of evolution, and appears in different forms, just as a drop of water may remain in the form of invisible vapour, then it takes the form of a drop of water, then it freezes and becomes snow, and afterward becomes hard like solid ice. All these different stages of water are nothing but the various manifestations and expressions of H₂O. This will give you an idea of how this earth has become so solid through the imperceptible force. Thought is nothing but a manifestation of finer matters. Thought is egoism (*aham*). Egoism (*aham*) is the first cause of thought and that when materialized, takes forms. Thought becomes materialized. When you think of a blister on your hands, you will get a blister. You will find examples of it amongst the Roman Catholic saints, and the power of thinking has brought out stigmata in them. That is nothing but the intense concentration

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भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।

अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥७४॥

Sri Krishna has said that these eight different states include everything of the gross phenomenal universe. He was right, but that does not explain everything. There is something else, which I have described as an inferior nature, or the animal soul by which the universe is sustained. Here you will notice that the animal soul is considered, not as a thing, or a result, or the combination of matter, but as a separate entity. The animal soul, which is the source of consciousness, is not produced by the combination of atoms or ether or their combination, but this is something distinct, and entirely separate from those manifestations of phenomena, and that is the superior nature of the Universal Spirit, or God. That I have already described as the eight-fold nature that supplies the material for the enjoyment of that superior nature which is the enjoyer (*bhoktā*). The soul is the enjoyer, while the mind, intellect, sense-powers and gross material body—all these give the means for enjoyment (*bhoga*) to the soul. We are enjoying the existence of the body, but the body does not enjoy. You enjoy a certain thing, but the 'I' does not enjoy. You do enjoy through your senses. You have a pleasant or an unpleasant thought in your mind; and the mind does not enjoy, but you enjoy. That pleasant or unpleasant thought itself does not enjoy, but you enjoy, and that is the animal soul, which is the inferior nature of the body.

The question whether the soul is the combination of material forces does not here arise, because it has already been refuted. The arguments have not been given here, but the commentator brings out all these arguments, and we are taking it as an universal truth that the soul is immutable, immortal, immaterial, unchangeable, and one, and that is the superior nature in the universe, by which the universe is sustained, because it is the source of life. Wherever there is the expression of life, there is the soul. The inferior nature is dull and insensate, and is constructed to bring bondage. If we are attached to this inferior nature, we are in bondage, but the superior nature is pure. It is our very self and Sri Krishna has said that 'it is a part of mine'. The superior nature is separate from the inferior one, which deludes and is destructive. The superior one is my nature (*prakṛiti*). It is the source of all living and non-living being, and it is the ground of the world-phenomena.

“So Arjuna, you must know the superior nature of mine,” says Sri Krishna.¹⁰

As we have a soul, so the universe has one Universal Soul, and our souls are a part of that Universal One. That by which life is sustained, is the animal soul, and even, in the Vedas, you will find the expression, ‘having entered into the material forms or physical bodies, with this animal soul the Lord sustains the universe and develops names and forms and enjoys these names and forms, thoughts and form extension’. Thought and extension are two things. Spinoza says in his philosophy, “thought is the inside thing and extension is the outside thing”. So these two things can be projected by a living soul, and that is not the result of either thought or extension, but it is the knower of thought and extension.

Now we understand these two natures, and when we have grasped the meaning of these two natures, the one being eight-fold and the other, the sustainer and life-giver, we have understood everything of the universe. In Vedanta, the idea of special creation is rejected. The scientific people say that these things have come into existence and the causes are given, so we must take them scientifically and expect scientific conclusions. Science and Vedanta go hand in hand. Though their methods of investigation are different and are different in name and form, yet, in the final analysis, they have come to the same ultimate truth of the universe. Sri Krishna has said: “All beings, whether animate or inanimate, have their birth in this two-fold nature of mine, therefore I am the origin and dissolution of the whole universe, because all beings, whether animate or inanimate have their birth in this two-fold nature of mine”.¹¹

If you analyse your own self, you will find you have this physical form, which is the combination of material atoms and forces, and you have sense-powers, expressions of the mind substance, thought, reasoning, and the self-conscious soul. As you are composed of all these objects, so is every one else. This

¹⁰ अपरेयमितस्तन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो यदेदं ध्यायते जगत् ॥७५

¹¹ एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वानीत्युपधारय ।

phenomenal universe is also composed of these things. From the minutest animalcule to the highest human form, everything between these two stages of evolution, is composed of these eight different stages of this lower nature, which is the life-giver or animal soul. Therefore, God is the cause of the phenomenal universe by his two-fold nature. He has no other cause, but He is the cause of all. He is the cause of the individual souls directly, and is the cause of the phenomenal forms indirectly. Through nature He is the cause of the whole universe directly and indirectly. He is the omniscient and omnipotent Ruler, and everything in the universe. Everything divine belongs to God. The insensate (*jada*) *Prakṛiti* rejoices in the form of the gross physical or animal body, while that part of my true self, which is the individual or animal soul, appears in that body as the enjoyer and knower of the manifestations of nature.

So you see that there are two things, intelligence or spirit and matter, and the combination of these two appears in various forms. These varieties have given rise to different schools of Vedānta philosophy. The dualists explain these three by making the Lord as separate from the matter and the individual souls. If you think of the individual souls, each one of them is the creator and each individual soul is also separate from the Supreme Deity, and that would give the foundation of dualism. If you think that this individual soul is a part of this Universal Spirit, which is the whole, and though we are separate, yet we are inseparable, that will give you an idea of qualified non-dualism. Intelligence and matter are the parts of one stupendous whole, and the individual souls form the body of the Universal Spirit. Now when the gross material universe forms the body of the Supreme Deity, then the idea is involved in the qualified non-dualistic school of Vedānta philosophy, and if you think of the spirit or individual soul as one with the highest spiritual plane, then it gives rise to the monistic or non-dualistic idea.

There are three different schools of Vedānta philosophy, and these are subdivided also. These schools are divided into three, monistic, qualified non-dualistic, and dualistic (*advaita*, *vishistadvaita* and *dvaita*). They are only looking at the same thing from three different standpoints. According to the qualified non-dualistic school, *Iśvara* or the Supreme Deity consti-

tutes the three-fold existence of our material and individual soul, mental and spiritual substance evolving from the Supreme Deity. There is the relation of identity and difference (*bhedābheda*). It is non-dual, yet it is qualified, it is monism, yet it has attributes. Sri Ramanuja was the founder of this school of philosophy. He lived in India in about 1617 B.C. His philosophy is like that of Spinoza. He said: "There is one infinite substance and that is God. Everything is in God, and without Him nothing can be conceived. He is the unchangeable Being of which all things are His manifestations. He has two infinite attributes, extension and thought." He has further said: "Thought and extension are the modes of manifestations of the Divinity in this universe. God is the substance without which nature and souls cannot have independent existence. God is both the conscious and the unconscious cause. God is the material as well as the spiritual objective, and God is also the subjective ideal of the cosmos. Truth, matter, and nature have come out of God, but according to the dualistic idea, that nature is eternally separate from God, and God is an independent body.

There are different commentators and different schools which hold these different ideas, and they are correct from their own viewpoints. Now, when they think themselves as separate from God, they are dualists. When they come to realize their true selves and their relation to nature and God, they become the qualified non-dualists, and when they realize their undivided absolute nature, they become the monists. These are the three different grades. We accept them and have no quarrel with any of them. We accept them as different stages of spiritual evolution of the soul. Those who have been reading Sankara, are reading the highest, the non-dualistic or monistic idea. The qualified non-dualistic idea is the middle, and those have been reading Madhva, will find the dualistic idea, which is suited to our ordinary understanding. God is the stupendous whole, whether we look at Him from the phenomenal standpoint or from the ordinary standpoint. There is in essence, one existence. There may be different in manifestations and expressions, but when we boil down, all these manifestations and expressions come to the simplest truth and the absolute supreme Being is called the Brahman or God. There is nothing

else than the Brahman, and all these phenomena are strung as gems and pearls in the thread of the Brahman. You have seen how rows of pearls and gems and precious stones can be strung together with a thread. So you can imagine that all these beautiful manifestations can be held together in garland with the thread of the Supreme Deity. He has gone through everything like a thread in a garland of gems and pearls or flowers, and we will have to realize that thread.⁸ He is called that Supreme Spirit in which are strung all these various forms. God the Absolute is immanent and at the same time transcendent. He dwells in us and at the same time outside of us. He is the one stupendous whole

⁸ Vide the *Gita*, 7.7.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A SEER OF GOD IS A LIBERATED SOUL

In the last chapter, we learnt that there are two natures, one is the cause of the material phenomena, and the other is called the animal or living soul. The first one is called by Sri Krishna the lower nature of the Divinity or the inferior nature or *Prakriti*, and the other, the animal soul, is the superior or higher nature or *Prakriti*, and the combination of these two natures make up the phenomenal universe which is known as the world-appearance. The lower one consists of all the material elements, atoms, material forces, and physical forces i.e. everything except the self-conscious ego or the soul.

In the fourth chapter we learnt that even thought and egoism are contained in the lower manifestations. Here you will notice that the true nature of the soul is beyond thought, reason, and sense of 'I'. The sense of 'I' may stop, but still the self-conscious soul is there. Again we have learnt that these two natures are like the manifestations of the divine power, or divine energy. They proceed from the Divinity, the one universal uncaused cause, the *Atman*. Nature becomes the direct cause, and the Divinity, being the cause of nature, is the indirect cause of all phenomena.

In India, this idea has given rise to the conception that God is not only the instrumental cause (*nimitya-karana*) of the universe, but is the material cause (*upadana-karana*) also. In fact, the material cause and the instrumental cause are one. In the Christian conception of God, God is the instrumental cause, and the material cause is different from God. Although it is not clear in the description in the Genesis, still matter is supposed to exist somewhere out of which God gives shape and form to the phenomenal objects. "The Lord breathed over the water, that water is the causal water", but, in India, the idea is that the instrumental and the material causes are one. God¹ of Advaita Vedanta is the instrumental cause and also the

¹ Here God means the absolute indeterminate Brahman of non-dualistic Vedanta, which is regarded as the causeless cause.

material cause like a spider. The instrumental cause is sometimes called the efficient cause in Vedanta. In making a pot, clay is the material cause and the potter is the efficient cause of the clay out of which he makes that pot. So God is not only the designer, but is also the material. The earthly creation or earth came out of Him, and the grosser expressions are the power that proceed from the Divinity, the *Atman*. This idea you will have to hold in mind while studying Vedanta philosophy. When Vedanta concerns God, the Creator, it makes God the instrumental as well as the material cause of the universe.

In the seventh verse, we learnt that there is nothing else higher than 'I'—'मत्तः परतरं नान्यात् किञ्चिदस्ति'। As I said before that when an Incarnation of God speaks or gives instruction, and uses this word 'I' or 'me', he never uses it in the sense of the lower self or ego, but he means the Divinity. So, when Sri Krishna has said, 'there is nothing higher than I', he does not mean any personality, but he means the Divine Self, or the Infinite Being, dwelling in all living souls. "There is nothing higher than I, all these phenomena are strung on me like gems on a thread".² The example, 'as different pearls are tied in a thread' (सूत्रे मणिगणा इव) conveys the idea of God who interpenetrates or pervades every phenomenal object. What you call an atom, is penetrated by that almighty and all-pervading Being. That atom is a living atom on account of that Supreme Being that penetrates through that atom. The sun, the moon, the stars and all the planets, the animal and

² मत्तः परतरं नान्यात् किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥७॥७

Madhusudana Sarasvati said regarding this verse:

'यस्मादहमेव मायया सर्वस्य जगतो जन्मस्थितिभङ्गहेतुस्तस्मात् परमाथतः * * । निखिलदृष्ट्याकारपरिणतमायाधिष्ठानात् सर्वभासकं 'मत्तः' सद्रूपेण स्फुरणरूपेण च सर्वास्युच्यतात् स्वप्रकाशपरमानन्दचैतन्यघनात् परमार्थसन्मात्रात् स्वप्रदृश इव स्वाप्रिकं मायाविन इव मायिकं शुक्तिकलावच्छिन्नचैतन्यादिवदज्ञानकल्पितं रजतं 'परतरं' परमार्थसत्यम् 'अन्यत् किञ्चिद'—दपि नास्ति । * * सर्वस्य चैतन्यप्रथितमात्रे दृष्टान्तः 'सूत्रे मणिगणा इव' इति ।'

vegetable kingdoms, and all other objects that we perceive with our senses, are pervaded by the almighty Being. Therefore God is not sitting somewhere in some particular space or realm and from there He is commanding, but He is all-pervading i.e. He is immanent and resident in nature. Nature is also inseparable from Him. He is not even separated from us, but we live in and through Him, and cannot exist even for a second being separated from Him. This is as true as the saying that we live and move and have our being in God. This is absolutely true. Everything that has some peculiarity, that peculiarity proceeds from God, the Divinity. Wherever there is a special attraction, or fashioning of the body, or quality of any kind, there is the special manifestation of the Divinity, or the special manifestation of the Divine power, because the Divinity is all-pervading. It should be called the special manifestation of the Divinity itself. The Divinity is woven into that being. "I am the sapidity of water, the brilliance of the sun and the moon, I am the *Pranava* of all the scriptures, and I am the sounding quality of ether and space. I am the soulfulness or humanity of all human beings."⁸ When you say 'humanity', it is the essence of everything, and it is of God. You must not take it for granted that it means anything other than what is divine, but it is divine, that which gives life to everything i.e. which animates and saturates everything. So by sapidity of water that may mean nothing. If there were no brilliancy in the sun, or in any planet, there would not be any sun or planet. That which gives a being to all objects and makes the beings as they are, is the essence, and that essence proceeds from the Divinity itself. *Pranava* is the sound OM. This sound includes all the audible sounds that we can utter with our mouth. 'AU' is the first and 'M' is the last. First you leave the mouth wide open when you pronounce 'AU' and when you close your lips, there is the last sound, M which includes all different sounds intervene between the first and the last, and the intervening sound is described by U.

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रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥७८

The 'AU' sound is the foundation of all sounds and all scriptures, and you cannot utter anything without opening your mouth. 'A' is the first sound, and it is called the first letter of the alphabet in Sanskrit. Our vowels are arranged phonetically and not like English or the alphabet of any other language, and that shows that all sounds that human beings can pronounce with the lips or the organs of speech, the tongue and lips, are founded upon that compound sound OM. So everything that you can utter, is included in that word OM (Om-kara).

So Sri Krishna says, "wherever there are scriptures, all scriptures are said to come out from this one single all-pervading sound OM". This is the eternal sound and it is the name of the Divinity. All other names are included in this universal sound. Therefore, whether you call God, or Jehovah, no other sound is necessary. There is nothing higher or greater than this sound OM. It is the symbol of all sounds that human beings can pronounce. Therefore, when they say scriptures are teachings or sayings of the great sages, there is nothing but the various expressions of this one universal sound. When the Hindus did not have the Vedas or the scriptures, they heard this sound OM, and when that was verbally explained, it filled hundreds and thousands of volumes.

When you hear any sound, it is a vibration of air, and when it is analyzed still farther, it can be traced to the vibration of ether. That vibration is the manifestation of the divine power. Humanity or manliness is that which makes one regarded as a human being. We cannot define it. We are all human beings, and there is something in you and me that makes us human. Now what is in you that makes you human? It is an abstract something; it is the combination of all these qualifications, powers, and forces like intelligence etc., and these are the expressions of the Divinity, which is unique and one.

Sri Krishna says: "I am the sweet odour in earth; I am the light in fire, the vitality in all living creatures, the austerity in ascetics".⁴ That which is called odour and is neither parti-

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्याञ्च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।

जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥७९॥

cularly sweet nor bad, is the quality of solid substance. An odour is nothing but the emission of fine particles. That which carries that particular something, we call odour or fragrance. You will find an odour in pure earth. Take any solid substance and it has some kind of odour. Odour is like the life of the solid substance and that which is its life, is the essence, and that essence has come from the divine source, God.

We cannot imagine fire without heat or light. Therefore, heat and light should be counted as the life of fire. Vitality in all living creatures is divine, and all these qualities should be considered as the manifestation or expression of the divine power. A person who is an ascetic, goes through all things for the sake of development. Ordinarily we say a man cannot live without luxuries and comforts, but there are men who do not care for all these things and want nothing, and can live upon very simple food. That very tendency manifests some power that is in him and which other persons do not possess. That is something spiritual. Therefore, it is called a manifestation of the divine power.

Now we can understand how all these phenomenal objects are woven in the Lord. We cannot separate these things—the earth, fire, light or sun, moon, water, all living beings, vegetables, solids, liquids, etc. We cannot separate these things from the Lord, because He is like the thread passing through the beautiful garland connecting all these beautiful flowers together. Sri Krishna therefore says: “O Arjuna, know me to be the eternal seed of all beings and all animate and inanimate objects; the eternal seed, the intelligence of the intelligent and the energy of the energetic”⁵ Why have we got this intelligence which we claim as our own? You must remember that we have derived from that infinite source of intelligence, reasoning faculty and thought power and nothing belongs to us as individuals. It appears that intelligence belongs to us and we draw portions of it just as we draw air from the universe into our lungs. We utilize it and feel that we are living. Some may say that air which entered into our lungs, belongs to us. But it should be remembered

7

धीर्जं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।

बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥७१०

that intelligence or thought power which has entered into us, we could not claim it as our own property, and the real knowledge will open our eyes to the truth that all these things belong to the Divinity, and are, therefore, divine. Or it can be said that all powers, physical and mental, are nothing but the manifestation of that eternal energy.

Sri Krishna says: "The strength of the strong is manifested as passion or attachment. I am also the desire which is unopposed to the soul and spiritual laws".⁶ Here you will notice that passion or attachment and all things that proceed from ignorance, are not included as expressions of the divine power, but they are only misdirected powers. Passion is a misdirected power. So is attachment. So is desire which leads to immorality and unchastity. The desire itself leads to immoral acts, but is, in reality, the manifestation of divine power, because desire is the root all actions and all manifestations. So you see if you can hold the ideal of the higher desire, you will not have to crush it, but the desire for lower objects should be crushed. That which is the cause of the bondage of the worldly people, is different from that which leads to freedom. That strength, or power, by which we preserve our bodies as living beings on this material plane, or by which we can fight against environment, belongs to the Lord, the *Atman*. Our life is a ceaseless fight against environments. That strength by which we can fight and assert our individuality without ambition or anything, just for the sake of living and that which makes us survive in the struggle for existence, is the manifestation of divine strength, otherwise we would not exist today, and we would be crushed. Minute powers are even trying to crush us under their wheels. "All these physical and mental powers pertain to *satya*, *rajas*, and *tamas* qualities. Know them to proceed from Me, the Divine Being, but I am not in them, they are in Me".⁷

Here you get a definite idea that though God is immanent,

बलं बलवतां चाहं कामरागविवर्जितम् ।

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥७११

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।

मत्त एवेति तान् विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥७१२

yet He is transcendent. He dwells in the universe, yet He is outside of it, and He is not one with the material laws. Though He is separate, yet He *appears to be* the foundation. It is very difficult to grasp, but still we will try to explain it more clearly for our apprehension or knowledge.

These three states are mentioned according to the Sankhya philosophy. *Prakriti*, or creative energy, has three qualities which are expressed in nature. The first is *sattva*, the second is *rajas*, and the third is *tamas*. Everything that is good and leads to life, strength and light, whether physical or mental, is called *sattva*. Where there is strong activity in the mental or physical state, but not light, it is *rajas* which makes us do work. *Tamas* is what leads to darkness, dullness, stupidity, and ignorance. These three things or categories we find expressed in the universe. These classifications are old, nay, are older than any of the Greek philosophers, but were afterward taken up by them. It is said that other nations received these ideas of classification from India.

When your mind is peaceful and restful and you have very kindly feelings toward others instead of having revengeful feelings and when you have love and devotion for the Supreme, that state of mind you should consider as *sattva*. There cannot be anything higher than that. It will lead your soul to the absolute Truth, and make you approach God.⁸ The *rajas* state ordinarily means vanity, egoism, pride, ambition, desire for work, and all kinds of activities in our ordinary every-day life, that is intermediate, but is better than the last, known as *tamas*. When you have sorrow and dejection, you feel sleepy, and your intellect is covered with a veil of darkness like a cloud. Then you do not see things as they are and do not see the wrong side of things and make mistakes, and as a result you fall into sorrow, suffering, misery, and unhappiness, and all these different states are called *tamas*.

So you will be able to see what is your standard, and this should always be toward *sattva*. When *rajas* is separated from the *sattva* quality, whenever you have any tendency and have lost your ideal, then you do not know whether these tendencies are leading you to these higher realms, or would lead to

⁸ God means God the Absolute or transcendent Spirit.

bondage Now all right ideals proceeds from the *sattva* quality or wisdom. When *sattva* qualities predominate, you will know the true nature of things as they are and not be mistaken. Then you will not be deluded by false impressions. First find out who you are and from whence you proceed, and that tendency to analyse your own mind is the greatest friend you have in this world. There is no greater friend than that self-analysis. Find your own faults, correct yourself first, and always hold this idea that *sattva* quality, self-control, and that which brings peace and puts you in a state of meditaion, where you have forgotten everything of the world, are not the state of sleep, but are the state next to superconsciousness or divine realization.

God the Absolute is the absolute silence, and silence means that there remains no diversities or disturbances of *maya* and its categories Absolute calmness and serinity reign there. There the mind does not speak and, therefore, you hear the voice of the Lord Why do you not hear these revelations in the world of *maya*? Because your mind is too busy and you are constantly listening to your lower self. So stop that noise and you will hear the divine voice with calmness. It is already there, but you have no power to catch and appreciate it. God speaks in silence, therefore, you must try to develop the *sattva* quality. All the qualities, external or internal, which are contained in these three states of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, have come from that common source, *Prakriti* which resides in God or forms the part of God.

Prakriti, the divine energy, manifests in many different ways, and that is the cause of variation (of creation) Variety is the cause of these different qualities that exist in the universe and the best classification is that which takes these headings You could not decrease the number than these three if you tried to classify the whole universe. According to modern science perhaps, you would classify all phenomenal things under different heads, but these three qualities would answer the whole purpose. It has been said that these three qualities are unified into that one source, which is known as eternal energy. First there was one substance and out of that, these three qualities have manifested, and the combination of these three is that whole phenomenal universe. So see how they have analysed the whole univers and how they have simplified and ex-

plained it. It is not like the idea of a Being who said: "Let there be light" and there was light

All this phenomenal universe has come out from these three states of qualities (*gunas*) and go back to them again. These three qualities remain as latent in the *Prakriti* which is associated with the eternal supreme Being, and they come out again when the cycle of evolution begins. Cycle after cycle evolution is progressing, and will continue on and on until the end of eternity. "Being deluded by these three conditions consisting of qualities, all living beings do not know Me as immutable".⁹ The majority of people are deluded by these three states of qualities. Why they are deluded you can explain it very easily, because they are so busy. So much busied with the force which proceeds from these three states that they have no opportunity, and they have no time to think of anything that is higher than these three

How many business people think of anything higher than their sense perceptions? God is always beyond the sense-perceptions. You cannot feel or hear Him as speaking to you like an ordinary being. You cannot do that. He is imperceptable, and how many people care for that which is imperceptable? They want that which is tangible. If I can give you a few dollars, you will do anything for me. If I ask you to see something which will give you real bliss, you do not want to do it. You have no imagination and also no higher perception. You want something tangible that means money, but that should not be. Those who are living on this plane, cannot appreciate these teachings. They will have to come again and again for several incarnations to appreciate that which is beyond the senses. Only those who have become tired of these things, will long for something higher and greater, and the whole of society will find fault with him, will try to catch him, put him in a lunatic asylum, and persecute him in all possible ways, but if he can stand this, those who have persecuted him, will fall at his feet and worship him, because he has stood so much. Christ is not the only one who was so treated, it is the law everywhere that he is the greatest saint, who can become

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त्रिभिर्गणमयभविरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।

मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यं परमव्ययम् ॥७१३॥

a martyr and that is the human tendency. But true, sincere, and earnest souls longing for the highest, are willing to give hundreds and thousands of such bodies for the sake of truth. They will never sacrifice the ideal, and that class of people do exist in this world. Yet you will find occasionally here and there, in this country or in other countries, that class of people still, otherwise, this world have been the greatest place for punishment and suffering.

Sri Krishna has already said: "Being deluded by these conditions consisting of qualities, all human beings do not know Me as above them and immutable". Their minds are engrossed with ordinary material things and objects of senses, and their intellect is covered by ambition and all these phenomenal desires which proceed from *rajas* and *tamas* qualities. If you sit in a corner every day for a few moments merely for self-analysis and think of something outside of you, you will be able to control these two qualities. Sit quietly in your own room just half an hour and think that you are doing all these things and what for, who are you and why are you doing these things, is there any definite purpose? Yes, you will get some good results from this process of self-analysis. So search and you will find the solution. Each one will have to solve this for himself or herself. Analyse the mind. What kind of character you have, point it out for yourself, and try to correct your faults, and analyse how many times you have been truthful and how many times you are lying. Lying seems a necessary thing. I have asked several students who come here for instruction, and they have said that they could not live without lying, otherwise they would have to go into the jungles, and such has become the condition. What can you expect under such conditions? You lead such an impure and artificial life and you will find that it is a great benefit if you will sit in a quiet corner and analyse yourself. This analysis is necessary. Then you will get out of delusion and see that which is beyond these three states of *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. Remember that these states of qualities are known as the province of nescience (*ajnana*), so you will have to go beyond it, you will have to transcend this province. It is the witness (*sāksi*) of that peaceful state of mind, and that is your divine nature and that is God. God the Absolute is your divine nature.

Sri Krishna says: "Verily that charming power of mine by which the whole world is deluded, is divine. It consists of qualities, and is difficult to overcome; but they alone who seek refuge in me, go beyond this delusive power".¹⁰ There is a certain charm. If the whole world were not charmed by this power, there would not be the play of the world, and this world would vanish. It is like a theatre, and we are spell-bound each one of us. We go to the office and work, and come back exhausted, and go to sleep, and next day do the same, and it is a spell. If the spell were taken away from your eyes, the world would disappear. But he is the wise one who has gone beyond this charm and has seen things without being deluded by this charming power. That is seeing or realizing things in reality, and that is what Vedanta teaches you. You may not ordinarily see it, because you have hypnotized yourself by making fool of yourself. But how can I make you see it? Just study and analyse yourself every morning and evening, nay all the time, and you will find it out.

Why is it difficult to overcome mind or delusion? Because, it is difficult to understand that you are deluded or self-hypnotized. If the insane knows that he is insane, that insanity is gone. My Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to relate a story of a servant (of a *Guru*) who fled away when he came to know that he was a low class people. Similarly delusion or *maya* flies away when it is properly known. But ordinarily it is very difficult to know that one is deluded or insane. We have hypnotized ourselves, and it is also very difficult to make us believe that we have done it, and for that reason it is difficult to overcome the tendency. We will come back again and again, and do the same thing, and get blow after blow on our head. We will say, "O, I am tired now, this is all something like a dream". The best thing is this that we are holding slips out of our hand and then we come to our senses. It is the phantom of hope. It is a delusion or *maya*. Blows are the greatest teachers. Blows like disease, death, and all kinds of things which have force, are the greatest teachers. They

open our eyes and make us see things as they are, and then we say, 'Is this a dream?' 'Have I been dreaming so long?' Then we seek that which is beyond this dream and delusive power. Take refuge in God, and then we will cross the ocean of birth and death. Then we are restful, peaceful, and become enlightened which is the state of Godconsciousness (*brahmānubhūti*).

"But if this be the cause, if anybody can cross that delusive power and go beyond it, why do not the people worship and take refuge in Thee"?—that doubt arose in the mind of Arjuna, and, reading his mind, Sri Krishna says: "The evil doers, the self-deluded, and the vilest men, and those who are deprived of wisdom and are of demoniac nature, do not resort to Me and take refuge in Me; they cannot see clearly, they are the evil-doers, they are lying and doing cruel acts, they cannot see Me, because their eyes are not opened yet; they are self-deluded".¹¹ That is, Sri Krishna says: "The vilest of men are those who are trying to injure others constantly by mental thoughts and physical deeds. Those are constantly untruthful and are the vilest of all creatures. Those who are deprived of wisdom, are ignorant and are of demoniac nature, and do all kinds of wicked deeds pretending to be good and virtuous, do not worship Me, nor take refuge in Me. They are the ones who make up the majority of mankind in this world; they are nothing but the results of the *tamas* quality; they live in that state of darkness, and cannot see things as they are".¹²

Sri Krishna further says: "Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, the distressed, those who are suffering from some disease and trouble, in order to remove that trouble he takes refuge in me, and ultimately he appeals to the Lord for help; those who are true seekers of knowledge, they worship Me;

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न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढा प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।

माययापहतज्ञानां आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥७१५॥

¹² (a) Vide also *Gita*, 13 23 ; 14-19, 20 and 26.

(b) In the Verse 7.15, Sri Krishna has mentioned the term *āsura*. It is a vile nature, and those are passed of this base and vile nature, are known as the Asuras. Now who are the Asuras? असुषु रताः असुराः i.e. those who are addicted to the pleasures or enjoyments of the senses are known as the Asuras

then there are some who worship Me, because they want material prosperity like wealth or name or fame or position or some of kind of ambition and for that they worship Me. The fourth is the man of wisdom i.e. those who are wise, have gone beyond all material things. They do not care for material knowledge, but as they have received Divine knowledge, they are not distressed, and do not care to remove their troubles, but have gone beyond them and worship Me”¹³ Sri Krishna says that the distressed, the seekers after knowledge, the seekers after material prosperity, and the man of wisdom—these four classes of men worship Him. “The wise men who are ever devoted and one-pointed in love ; to them love is nothing but God and they are true lovers of wisdom, and to them I am nothing but God and, consequently, I am excessively dear to them, and so they are to Me”.¹⁴ A wise man loves in same way. He has nothing else in the whole world, and that is the only object which he cares for, and, consequently, he receives divine love in the same amount, otherwise it would not be justice.

The other classes are good also. Noble indeed are all those who worship the Lord, being distressed, or being a seeker after knowledge, or being seeker after material prosperity, because they worship God and, therefore, they are good “All are noble, and noble indeed are all those, but the wise man I deem my very Self, a part of Me, for he with a devoted soul seeks Me alone as the highest goal”.¹⁵ The wiseman is a part of God, because he is devoted to the Lord, and seeks Him alone as the highest goal. Others seek different things, or wish the removal of certain diseases, or wish for knowledge of something, but a wise man is one who worships God not for anything else. He does not care for Christian Science or any other doctrine or dogma, because those things encourage desire. He

¹³ चतुर्विधाऽभजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥७।१६

¹⁴ तेषां ज्ञानी-नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।

प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥७।१७

¹⁵ उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।

आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा माभेवानुत्तमां गतिम् ॥७।१८

worships God not for material prosperity, but because there is nothing else in the universe worth-loving. Even the body seems to him transitory. You may cure diseases today, but you may die tomorrow, as you cannot live forever, you will have to die no matter how you live. You can cure disease by using medicine of some kind. It is for this reason the Swamis¹⁶ do not use their energy for healing diseases. So many people come and say, 'why do you not demonstrate your powers by healing disease? You would be such a success' I do not wish to heal diseases, but I tell them to go to the healers.

God is the highest goal, and the material prosperity and children and wife and husband all are temporary. The only permanent thing in the universe is God, and others are temporary relations. Those temporary relations may last for hundreds or thousands of incarnation, but still they are temporary ones. The nearest and dearest is God and nothing can be higher or more permanent than God. Earthly friends are good, but they are earthly. Earthly relations are good, but they are earthly. We are, in reality, all children of God. Just feel it, meditate on it, and hold it day and night, firm as a rock, and you will have no fear. If death comes, you will leave the body with that thought that you are a blissful child of God and have no body else but God. God is the only support and refuge and you will be with God in the end and will not have to come back.

Sri Krishna further says: "The man of wisdom reaches Me at the end of many births. Such a lofty soul (Mahatma) who sees the Divinity everywhere is very rare; if you once reach the Divinity, you will see the Divinity which pervades every thing. Men go through many births and come back again to this earth, and get ready, and when they have got ready, they realize the Supreme in the end, and after realizing, they do not come back, and are not born again"¹⁷

"He who sees the Divinity everywhere, is called a Mahatma".

¹⁶ The Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order, who reside in the West.

¹⁷ बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते ।

बासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥७१९

Regarding महात्मा: Madhusudana Sarasvati said. 'अतः स एवं ज्ञानपूर्वकमद्भुक्तिमान् 'महात्मा' अत्यन्तशुद्धान्तःकरणत्वाद्जीवन्मुक्तः सर्वोत्कृष्टो न तत्समोऽनोऽस्ति * * *'

You have heard the word Mahatma many times, but who is a Mahatma. It is he who sees the Divinity everywhere and such a lofty soul is very rare. A Mahatma means a great soul. Theosophists believe that this word refers to some imaginary beings who dwell in the mountains and write mysterious letters and do miraculous deeds to help this world. I should pity them, because they could do better in helping the world in other ways, and a real Mahatma is not one like them, nor like one who came here a short time ago, who cursed everybody.

A real Mahatma is one who sees God everywhere, and such a Mahatma is very rare—"स महात्मा सद्गुरुः"। A Mahatma (महात्मा) is one whose heart and soul are purified, who never does anything for his own personal benefit, and is unattached to anything of the deceitful world. Absolute non-attachment is also very rare. Non-attachment is the sign of one who has attained to this state of Godconsciousness and has become a real Mahatma. A real Mahatma is devoid of passion and attachment. Does it refer to all kinds of attachment? No, it only refers to that which brings you in bondage and makes you a slave. Friendship does not make one a slave. Therefore anything to which you are attached passionately, is binding, and friendliness is the expression of real love, and real love is God.

CHAPTER XXIX

PURIFIED SOULS REACH THE STATE OF SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS

'The man of wisdom reaches Me', says the Lord, 'at the end of many births, and such a lofty soul who sees the Divinity everywhere, is very rare.'² One of the means of reaching God is to see God everywhere and to see God in all living creatures and in everything. The *mantra* of the *Isha-Upanishad* advocates this truth that everything in this universe is pervaded by God: '*Isha vasyamidam sarvam*' God's omniscient presence should be felt or realized by the sincere devotee. Such a man is called a Mahatma. *Maha* means great or rare, and *atma* means soul. This kind of Mahatma is very rare. People have a very wrong notion regarding this word Mahatma. It is not their fault, some of the Theosophists have made it so mysterious that those who do not know anything about India, think that the word Mahatma was given only to those who can show occult powers, who live in a cave or a desert where nobody can reach them and come down just to perform miracles once in a while. But the real meaning of the word is very different. It is a title given to the great spiritual teachers and such wise men who have felt the presence of the Divinity within themselves, can see the Divinity everywhere.

"The man of wisdom reaches me at the end of many births", but it may be asked as to why is it that a man of wisdom takes many births? Why a man of wisdom does not reach God at one birth? To this it can be said, because it is very difficult to rise on the highest plane of spiritual development suddenly. You will have to proceed step by step for progress. It is a process of evolution, and takes a long time, and when we have come to the last stage of evolution, we realize this divine and spiritual oneness, and rises high above all material things, all attractions of the world, and all attachment to earthly objects. Such souls attain to the highest spiritual truth and enter into the abode of eternal peace and happiness.

Here Sri Krishna explains in the next verse why ordinary

people cannot realize the Divinity very easily: "The majority of people whose reason has been led away by various desires, resort to other gods and other lower forms of the Divinity, and being deluded by their selfish nature they follow the rules of some particular forms of worship and devotion"¹ People worship God through various desires, and do not worship the highest form of God, but take some particular phase. They are devoted to some particular form simply to have their desires fulfilled, and when their desires are fulfilled, they do not care for that kind of worship and remain there, being bound by the ties of earthly desires and other tendencies. They remain on these plains of existence and, when their selfish motives are fulfilled, they do not care for devotion, or for worship of the Supreme. They are not ready, yet, they are in the lower stages of evolution, consequently, they cannot feel the presence of the Divinity everywhere. As you will find among the spiritualists, for instance, they worship the departed spirits of some relatives. Some worship the *Devas* or bright spirits who can do some good and can give some particular kind of knowledge.

There are people who are devoted to some spirits for the fulfilment of some desires, and when these have been fulfilled, they are satisfied. They cannot attain the highest; they have not reached the goal of evolution; they are in ignorance of their true nature, and they have not solved the problems of life. Some worship God in some form for the sake of children, for fame, and for conquering their enemies. You will find amongst different classes of people, even amongst the Christians who worship Christ for these things. Some worship Christ and pray to him for a good husband, or for wife or money. During the Cuban war they prayed for victory and, when the victory was won, they stopped their prayers. It is for the gratification of their selfish motives they worship God, and they will only produce temporary results and not those that are the highest.

There are many bright spirits or smaller gods. They are not exactly gods in the sense of the highest Supreme Being. You may hear of many accounts regarding the statement that

¹

कामैस्तैस्तैर्ह तज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्तेऽन्यदेवताः ।

तं तं नियममास्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥७१२०

the Hindus worship many gods, but those gods are like bright spirits. They are the *Devas* and not the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is one, but there are many *Devas* who are under the Supreme Being and are just in the intermediate state between the human and the highest forms of spirituality and divinity. They fill the intermediate stages, and they exist in different gradations. Some are existing on some plains much higher than our plane. There are Indras and other *Devas*, who fill certain positions. There are other heavens, and all these heavens are governed by certain classes of spirits or *Devas*. These positions are filled again and again by other beings, who by their good deeds become well-fitted for these positions. So the worship of these minor gods or *Devas* can only bring the results which are of lower nature on the material plane, but those desires being fulfilled, the worshippers do not accomplish the highest and the best results.

“Whatsoever devotee seeks to worship with faith whatsoever form, with him that same faith do I make firm and unflinching. When a devotee is trying to worship some particular form of the Divinity for some particular purpose with faith, that same faith was given to him by Me. I am the source of that faith as well as the source of making that faith firm and unflinching, and through my grace that devotee gets a firm faith in worshipping that particular form of the Divinity”.²

Here you will notice that the Divinity or God has no particular name or form, but the same Divinity or God who is universal, can be worshipped under any name and through any form. He can be worshipped in the form of Christ or Buddha or Krishna, or some spirit, and He can be worshipped without any form having no special name, but it depends upon the tendency of the individuals, and also depends upon the gods which the individual souls are worshipping. One man accomplishes certain results, or has certain desires fulfilled, by worshipping Christ, and if he worships Christ through faith, that faith is confirmed by the supreme Lord. Here you may

²

यो यो यां यां तनु भक्तः श्रद्धयाचितुमिच्छति ।

तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥

identify Christ with the Supreme Lord. So the Buddhist will identify Buddha with the Supreme Lord, but all this is on account of their faith i.e. of the faith of the devotee. "Endued by such faith he engages in the worship of that form of God and obtains from Him the object of his desires, which are, in reality ordained by Me,"³ says the Supreme Lord. Whatever result we get through our worship or devotion, comes from the Lord. We may think that our lower ideal, which brings some special or particular form of God or deity, is fulfilling our desires and bringing the objects of our desire to us, but, in truth, they come through a certain law and that law has not been established by those lower beings, or by the minor gods or deities. It is an eternal law, and the source of that law is the Supreme Being, the Divinity Himself.

The law of *karma* brings the results. What is the law of *karma* or law of action and reaction, or cause and sequence? If we have certain desires, they will bring their results, and these will be of similar nature as the desires and, as this law can only be explained properly and fully by one who is beyond all laws. Is there any one beyond all laws and beyond the law of *Karma*? No, there is not in the ordinary sense amongst us or amongst the *Devas*. But there is One, who is above all laws, and that is the Divinity or the absolute Eternal Truth, and that Divinity or Truth cannot be subject to any law.

Wherever there is any particular form like a bright spirit, or a minor form of god, that being is subject to the law of *karma*, or action and reaction, or cause and sequence. As we cannot understand that law very fully, because we are subject to it, so the *Devas*, or the bright spirits, who have certain powers and fulfill certain desires of the devotees. They do not also understand that law perfectly, because they themselves are bound by the same law and only the omniscient and omnipotent eternal transcendent Being who is above and beyond all laws, can understand the working out of that causation, and others cannot.

"Transitory is the fruit obtained by such men of poor intellect, who worship other deities leaving the Eternal Truth

³

स तथा श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।

लभते च ततः कामान् मयैव विंष्टान् हि तान् ॥७२१-२२

When we worship other deities, or other forms of the Divinity, for our selfish purpose, or for the fulfillment of our desires, we get those results, but those results are temporary and perishable. Those results are not real or eternal. The worshippers of the minor deities go to their deities, but those who are devoted to Me, the Supreme Lord 'come unto Me'. The worshippers of Buddha will go to Buddha, the worshippers of Christ will go to Christ and the worshippers of some other kinds of deities will go to them, but those who worship the *Atman*, the omniscient and omnipotent Eternal Truth, will go to the *Atman* i.e. will realize *Atman*. This is a law which most of the Western minds do not understand. You may think that in India there are many gods and goddesses and the people worship them, but those who do worship them, do so for selfish desires, in order to get this object or that desire. If you wish you need not go to the Supreme Lord, the *Atman*, but go to some *Devas* or minor gods or goddesses and your desires will be fulfilled. But if you worship the *Atman*, the results will be eternal and you will realize the all-consciousness *Atman*.

To have faith and to practise devotion and to worship the minor deities we need just as much faith, devotion and love as we need in worshipping the Supreme Deity, but the result of the one is perishable, while the result of the other is imperishable and eternal.

It has already been said that there are four kinds of worshippers: Those who are in trouble, those who are seekers of knowledge, those who want some objects or desires, wealth, fame or position, or prosperity or happiness, enjoyment, pleasures after death etc., and the last is the wise man who loves God simply for God's sake without having any desire of any kind. The last is the highest. Those who wish to have their diseases cured or some earthly desires fulfilled, can worship minor gods and goddesses, or bright spirits, or *Devas*, or some particular manifestation of some particular form, and they can obtain these results very quickly. Those who worship the Supreme Lord, go to the Supreme Lord in the end. Why do not all people worship the Supreme Lord, and why do not

अन्तवत्तं फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।

देवान् देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्त्या यान्ति मामपि ॥७२३

the people understand Him? It is very difficult to understand Him. Sri Krishna says that He himself is the manifestation or Incarnation of the Supreme Lord, and he says. "Those who worship me will come to Me". "Why do not all people worship me? Because, not knowing my divine nature which is unchangeable, imperishable, and transcendental, they think of Me as one who is unmanifest"⁵ When the Supreme Lord incarnates or manifests Himself in a human form ordinary people do not understand that Divine manifestation, but think of Him as just like other or a common man. As they have come into existence through the channels of their parents, or through the laws being bound by the law of *karma*, they think that there is no difference between an Incarnation and an ordinary man and, consequently, they do not worship the Supreme Lord even when He manifests himself for the sake of establishing righteousness and truth.⁶

Here you will notice that in India the idea of an Incarnation of God is very strong. As the Christians believe in the Incarnation of God in the form of Christ, so almost all the Hindus believe in the Incarnation of the Supreme Deity, and that Incarnation is not limited by time or place or nationality. God can appear at any time in any place among any nations of the world, but these Divine manifestations, or Incarnations of God are not easily understood. Ordinary people do not recognize them. They think of them as ordinary mortals, and, therefore, they do not worship these manifestations for eternal or everlasting results.

The difference between an ordinary mortal and an Incarnation of God (*Avatāra*) is expressed in this way. An ordinary

⁵ अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥७१२४

⁶ Regarding the notion or idea of a common man who think the Divine Incarnations (*Avatāras*) as ordinary men, Madhusudana Sarasvati said:

“परं सर्वकारणरूपमव्ययं नित्यं मम भाव स्वरूपं सोपाधिकमजानन्तस्तथा निरुपाधिकमपानुत्तमं सर्वोत्कृष्टमनतिशयाद्वितीयपरमानन्दधनमनन्तं मम त्वरूपमजानन्तो जीवानुकारिकार्यदर्शनाजीवमेव कश्चिन्मां मां मन्यन्ते । * * अग्रे च वक्षते ‘अवजानन्ति मां मूढा मानुषीं तनुमाश्रितम्’ इति ।”

mortal gets his body and manifests himself as the resultant of his previous works. and every one of us is the resultant of those previous deeds, thoughts, and ideas which existed in in our previous births. The idea of Incarnation is very strong amongst the Hindus, consequently, they have their belief and explain it in this way that each individual soul reincarnates again and again in order to have his desires fulfilled and to manifest these powers that are latent in the souls, and each one of us has got this body according to the tendencies that we had before we were born and that had existed before we took these forms. But when the Lord manifests Himself in a human form, He manufactures a body, and He is not subject to the law of cause, and there is the difference. Through His spirit He manufactures a body. For the time being He shows himself to be subject to the laws, yet, in reality, He is not subject to them, because His will-power is much stronger than the ordinary laws by which ordinary mortals are bound. These ideas I have explained more clearly in my lecture on 'What is a Reincarnation of God' in the book entitled *Divine Reincarnation*.⁷

Why do not ordinary people understand even when God incarnates and manifests Himself in a human form to do good to humanity? "Enmeshed by the mysterious power of my *maya*, or nature, I do not manifest to all these deluded people; they do not understand Me as unborn and imperishable.⁸ Ordinary people are deluded, their intellect is covered

⁷ Cf. also Swami Abhedananda *Religion, Revelation and God* (1968), p. 58

⁸

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योयमायासमावृतः ।

भूद्वोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥७२५

Regarding 'योगमाया', Sankara said 'योगो गुणानां युक्तिः घटनं सैव माया योगमाया ।' Anandagiri called *yogamāyā* as *ajñāna* "अनादि अनिर्वाच्याज्ञानं"

Madhusudana Sarasvati was a staunch follower of the theory of non-dualistic Vedanta, but he was devoted to *bhakti*, and so he described in connection with the word 'नाहं' the greatness and divinity of Sri Krishna with sweet and beautiful language thus "सर्वयोगिध्येयं वैकुण्ठ-

स्थमैश्वरमेव रूपं * * श्रीवत्स-कौस्तुभ-वनमाला-किरीट-कुण्डलादि-दिव्योपकरणशालिनी कम्बुकमलकौमदकीचक्रवरधारिचतुर्भुजे * *" etc. In the concluding portion of

with a veil, and, consequently, they cannot see and understand things as they are, and so they make mistakes in every step. In order to understand the manifestation of the Lord, we should rise above the ordinary plane i.e. the plane of ordinary mortals or the plane of *ajñāna*. We should have our spiritual eyes open before we can see the Divinity in that manifestation, otherwise, we would regard Him as an ordinary mortal, just as Christ and other Incarnations were regarded as an ordinary mortal even by those nearest to Him. Even in the life of Buddha you will find that He was regarded as an ordinary mortal. But there were wise ones who came and, looking at Him, fell at His feet, and worshipped Him as the Supreme Deity as the Incarnation of God. In the life of Sri Krishna, and that of Christ, we find the same. We find the same in Ramachandra. He was the Lord of the universe and He was worshipped by hundreds and thousands, but others came and looked at Him and called Him a common man.

“Deluded by the mysterious power of my nature” says Sri Krishna, “I do not manifest to all. These deluded people do not know Me as unborn and imperishable, they cannot see far, they have not the knowledge of the spiritual nature, and they do not know themselves, consequently, being filled by this ignorance they see the wrong side of things, they mistake one thing for another, and misinterpret things.” But, in reality, even when the Lord is born, still He is unborn, when He appears as perishable, still He is imperishable.

Further he says: “I know all beings of the past, present, and future, but no one knows me”⁸ The Lord knows every-

his commentary on the 18th chapter, he also wrote in the similar way

“वंशीविभूषितकराजवनीरदाभ्यात् पीताम्बरादरुणविम्बफलाधरोष्ठात्” etc

Sankarananda Sarasvati said regarding ‘योगमाया’ : “स्ववृत्त्या पुरुष

जनन-मरण-दुःख-त्रवाहेण योजयति इति योगा, सा च असौ माया च योगमाया ।”

•

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।

भविष्यानि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥७।२६

Here Sri Krishna has disclosed the fact that He is a divine Incarnation of God, who is an embodiment of knowledge and there is no doubt about it” : “अतोऽहं सर्वज्ञः परमेश्वर इत्यत्र नास्ति संशय इत्यर्थः ।”

—Madhusudana Sarasvati.

thing, yet no one knows Him entirely. God knows everything, but we do not know Him. There is a space between God and man, and that space is so thick with some persons that it is almost impenetrable, and with others it is not so. As we advance in spirituality, what first appears like a wall, becomes thinner and thinner and gradually it becomes so thin as to be like something transparent, we can see through it and, when it becomes transparent, we can see both sides, and with a wise man the wall has become transparent, and it does not conceal the divine nature as it does in ordinary mortals.

The Lord knows all beings of the past, the present, and the future, but very few know Him. "All creatures at the time of their birth are deluded by *maya*, or by the power of opposites, caused by desire and aversion, pleasure and pain, heat and cold, good and bad, etc., and by everything that is relative."¹⁰ We know that pleasure cannot exist without pain, as the idea of heat depends upon the idea of cold, and cold depends upon heat, etc., and by comparison we get knowledge of these different things that exist around us. As long as our minds are working on this plane of relativity, we are subject to time, space, and causation, and, therefore, we cannot realize that which is beyond time, space, and law of causation. But we must not forget that the Supreme Deity, who is absolute, is always beyond time, space, and causation, and in order to know or to realize Him, we must get beyond time, space, and causation which are the categories of *maya*.

At the time of birth when we first begin to perceive things of the world with a little of self-consciousness, some say we do not have consciousness, but it gradually develops. Still there is a kind of consciousness even in lower animals, and when that consciousness comes and begins to grow, it manifests on the plane of relativity, and this plane is on this side of the wall which separates us from the Supreme Deity and, therefore, we cannot see it. We have the tendency to fulfil our desires and to get away from things which we do not desire or want. These two tendencies are predominant in almost every one of us. We like that which we desire, and do not like that

which we do not desire. Everything that you like, is based upon your desire for that thing, and what you hate, is based upon your aversion to that thing, or the tendency to get away from that thing. "But a man of pure deeds whose whole life has become free from sins and is free from the delusion of pairs of love and hate, worships Me with that firm resolve."¹¹ Sinful tendencies proceed from selfishness. When we seek the comforts of ourselves at the expense of others, we become deluded and do all kinds of wrong and wicked deeds. But these men who have performed good deeds and through good works have become unselfish, have also become free from sins and their sins are completely destroyed. You should perform good deeds and have your sins destroyed. These are good deeds which make you forget yourself. When you give anything to anyone, you do not think that you are giving, but think that it belongs to him. When you do good to someone, you do not think you are doing good to him, but think that you are doing that work like an instrument in the hand of God. As long as you seek the results of your acts, you are thinking of your self, but when you do not perform any act for the sake of results, you are becoming unselfish, and those unselfish acts will help you to become free from sins of ignorance.

Lying is a sin, whether it is in joke or in business. You are committing a sin, by lying, because that habit makes you more selfish. Your social conditions have made you so that you cannot live without sinning, consequently your mind and intellect are covered with a thick veil of ignorance and you cannot expect to see things beyond time, space and causation. Therefore you will have to purify your thoughts and should perform good deeds. The standard of good deeds is that which makes you forget yourself for the time being. Do not seek, therefore, the results, and let them go to others, and that habit will purify your mind from the delusion of pairs, love and hate. When your mind is seeking the enjoyments, or pleasures, or loving something, you love some and hate others. At that time you should use discrimination (*vichāra*),

¹¹

येषां त्वन्तर्गतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।

ते ह्यहमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजते मां दद्व्यवृत्ताः ॥७२८

and try to rise above the sense of duality. You should know that you hate a person, because he has done something wrong, but instead of being a slave to your likes and dislikes rise above it, and you will be able to conquer habit and delusion. When your mind is attracted toward a certain thing, think it is best to rise above it. Just remember that you are attracted by that thing at one time and at another time you will be attracted by some other thing diametrically opposite. This habit will draw your mind away from the plane of discrimination. That is very harmful. So discrimination is very helpful even in your ordinary daily life, and when you have accomplished that for a certain length of time, you will be able to seek that which is highest, and you will find permanent solace and peace. And when your mind will not be distracted by the things of duality, you will be able to worship and meditate upon the highest Ideal for the eternal results of permanent peace and not for temporary results of a relative nature.

"Those who depending on Me", says the Lord, "strive for freedom from decay and death, realize and feel the Brahman, and then all actions lead to such realization".¹² If you depend on the Supreme Lord and struggle for freedom from decay and death, you will realize the absolute truth which is called the Brahman.

First of all, all men are devoted to the Lord who is with attributes and relative. The Lord is the creator and preserver of the world of duality, because a ruler could not be a ruler, if there were no object over which he could rule. As long as there is creation, so long there is a creator and, therefore a relation between creation and the creator exists. But that

¹² जरामरणमोक्षये मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति मे ।

ते ब्रह्म तद् विदुः कृतस्नमध्यात्मं कर्मचाखिलम् ॥७२९

Madhusudana Sarasvati said :

‘ते क्रमेण शुद्धान्तःकरणाः सन्तस्तज्जगत्कारणं मायाधिष्ठानं शुद्धं परं ‘ब्रह्म’ निर्गुणं तत्-पदलक्ष्यं मां विदुः । तथा आत्मानं शरीरमधिकृत्य प्रकाशमानं ‘कृत्स्नं’^१ उपाध्यपरिच्छिन्नं त्वं-पदलक्ष्यं विदुः ।’

creation cannot be everlasting, because all the objects of creation are subject to change and not eternal. Anything that is within the categories of time, space, and causality, cannot be eternal. So the relation between creation and the creator is temporary. It may last for millions of years, but still it is temporary. So after depending on the Supreme Being if you perform good acts and deeds, your mind will be purified and you will be able to know that which is the Absolute, and is beyond creation and causation. The Absolute is neither the creator nor the ruler of the universe, but is the source of everything. It is the eternal Truth. The true nature of the soul is also a part and parcel of the eternal Truth, and eternal Truth is called the Brahman in Vedanta.

Sri Krishna says: "Those who know Me as the Lord of the physical and divine regions and also as the Lord of all sacrifices, do realize Me at the time of their dissolution of the body, having entered into the state of *samādhi*."¹³ Through this worship of the Supreme Lord, all can attain to the abode of eternal Truth either in this body, or after leaving this body. At the time of death the true devotee withdraws his mind from all the objects of the material world and objects of senses and puts his mind into the state of superconsciousness (*samādhi*), in that state, his soul communes with the Supreme Lord, and stays in that state. After attaining that state of divine communion, he never comes back.¹⁴ Therefore we should perform good deeds and worship the Lord so that at the time of death we would be able to enter into that state of superconsciousness. This is possible and, if we do not accomplish that, we will remain eternally on the plane of relativity and will be subject to the law of *karma*. We will be bound by desires to the realm of ignorance, and will be obliged

¹³ साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च मे विदुः ।

प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्यंक्तचेतसः ॥७।३०

Regarding *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva* and *adhiyajna*, Sri Krishna will explain in the next eighth chapter of the *Gita*.

¹⁴ This happens for the ordinary realized souls, and not for the *Jivanmuktas*.

to be born again and come back again to this material plane and go through all the experiences of life in order to fulfil our desires and to gratify our tendencies.

We have gained experiences in this life, still we want to come back again, as our desires are not satisfied, and we want the same things over again. But how do we know that after death that tendency will be dead? That will bring us back to the world and we will have to do the same things over again. Generally we think that we have not that desire, but we will find it so strong that it will force us to do the same thing over again and to go through the same experience thousands of times, and for that reason we want more and more and will have to come again and again until we feel the transitoriness, until our mind is better filled for the Supreme Lord and we feel that these things of the world we do not want, and then will come the feeling of renunciation (*tyāga* or *vairāgya*). This feeling of renunciation is a very high feeling. Those who are highly advanced, can have that feeling. Those who have gained experiences and have learned by receiving blow that these feelings are transitory, do not care for anything of the world, and if all the best things of this life be taken away, still they are not sorry, because they know these things do not belong to them.

At that time when a person would rest his soul in the state of superconsciousness (*samādhi*), there is no relativity, no attraction of the senses, no earthly attachment, and where the soul is illumined with the light of divine wisdom, there comes the state of eternal peace, and blessedness. That state if you have once realized, you will never forget. You will sacrifice everything of the world to attain that blissful state, and enjoy it forever, and it is for that state that all the great seekers after Truth are struggling. In order to attain to that state, kings and princes have renounced their thrones, husbands have left their wives, fathers have left their children, and children have left their parents, because they would never be satisfied by any other thing of the world, just like a thirsty man who wants a drop of water and nothing else. You can give him the wealth of a millionaire, but he does not want it. That is the true state, and this state comes when the soul is ready for the highest realization, and that comes after many

births. Therefore Sri Krishna says: "After many births the wise man realizes Me and feels the presence of the Divinity everywhere. Such a high soul is very rare in this world, and he is a true Mahātmā".¹⁵

¹⁵ Vide Gita, 7.19.

CHAPTER XXX

THE ABSOLUTE CAN BE REALIZED BY YOGA

Now, begins the eighth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The eighth chapter begins with seven questions. Arjuna asked Sri Krishna: "what is that Brahman about which I have just spoken? "What is the nature of the Universal Spirit? What is the Self? What is action. What is declared to be the region of the material and what is divine, who is He, who is the director of our works in the body and the work which we do with our minds and bodies, and what is the nature of that director, and how at the time of death are Thou to be known by the self-controlled?"¹ Arjuna refers to Sri Krishna who is the spiritual Incarnation of the divine manifestation.

1

अर्जुन उवाच

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।

अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदेवं किमुच्यते ॥

अधियज्ञं कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन् मधुसूदन ।

प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥८।१-२

(a) Madhusudana Sasasvatī said

“अधिभूतञ्च किं प्रोक्तं पृथिव्यादिभूतमधिकृत्य यत् किञ्चित् कार्यं अधिभूतपदेन विवक्षितं किं वा समस्तमेव कार्यजातम् । * * अधिदेवं किमुच्यते देवताविषय-मनुध्यानं वा सर्वदैवतेष्वादित्यमण्डलादिष्वनुस्यूतं चैतन्यं वा । अधियज्ञं यज्ञमधिगतो देवतात्मा वा परब्रह्म वा ।”

Now all these have been explained in the second verse (8.2).

(b) ‘Purushottama’ means an Incarnation of God (*Avatāra*), and Sri Krishna, being an Incarnation, is known as Purushottama. Now what do we mean by *Purusha*? (i) ‘पूर्णं अनेन सर्वं इति पुरुषः’ । i.e. he who pervades everything of the universe by his Divine presence or existence, is known as *Purusha*; or (ii) ‘पुरि शयनाद् वा पुरुषः’ that is, he, who lies or exists in the *pura* or body i.e. in the lotus of the heart (हृदयपद्मे), is known as *Purusha*, and this *Purusha* is the *Atman*.

Perhaps, you will remember the verse: "Those who depending on Me, strive for freedom from decay and death, realize in full Brahman, the Absolute, realize also in full the individual soul and all actions that lead to such a realization".² When a person realizes God, he knows his true Self or the true nature of his own individual self. He knows also the souls of all individuals and all living creatures. He understands also such acts which lead the mind for such realization. Those two verses gave rise to these questions in the mind of the disciple.

Sri Krishna has said to Arjuna that those who do realize the Brahman, also realizes the individual soul and all actions that lead to such a realization. Naturally the question arises, what is the nature of the Brahman, and what is the nature of our soul within us and soul in actions?, and that also leads to other question, which includes the material and the divine and that question is, who is the director of our works in the body? In the last verse of the seventh chapter, we heard that "those who know Me as the Lord of the physical and the mental and also of the divine regions and as the Lord of all sacrifices, realize Me at the time of their departure having departed in the state of *samadhi*". These two verses include the questions that naturally arise in the minds of the students. Now you will notice that He (the *Atman*) is the director of our works in the body. The works are here referred to those works which concern our spiritual life and also our spiritual growth. Some speak of the sacrifices which the Rishis used to perform in ancient times. Almost all the scriptures of the world have prescribed some kinds of sacrifice for fulfilment of different desires which are in the minds of the devotees. Some works are meant for particular results, and others are meant for other results.

Sri Krishna who lived in India about 1400 B.C., is the teacher or expounder of this *Bhagavad Gita*, and he explains and answers these questions by saying: "The Absolute, which is imperishable, unchangeable, eternal, and infinite, is called by the name Brahman, and the individual self is said to be a part of its essence". The all-pervading Spirit or the Absolute dwells in us in the form of the individual self, soul or ego, and the true nature of the individual self or ego is the same as the

² Vide the *Gita* 7.29.

essence of the Brahman, or the imperishable Supreme Spirit. By action we should understand that which causes the origin and growth of all living creatures and preserves each individual and helps in the manifestation of the living beings, existed in a dormant or latent state before the beginning of evolution. All such works are designated by the word 'action' or *karma*. The individual self is that which first shows itself as the innermost self in the body and makes you feel that you are a being and are a self-conscious entity. You are sitting here and listening to what I am saying, and all these are actions. Now, that which first appears as yourself, or as your innermost self in the body and, on examination and proper analysis, which turns out in the end to be identical with the Supreme Reality, is the individual self, or ego (*jivatman*).

First of all, we know that we are living beings and have souls, but we do not know the true nature of our souls. We have heard from our childhood that there is such a thing as soul, but what relation does it bear to the Deity, we do not know, but when we begin to investigate and try to trace the source of that individual soul, we find in the end, after going through different stages of growth, that it is inseparable from the essence of the Divinity or the *Atman*. It is not separate, but, on the contrary, it contains the essence of the Divinity. It is a part and parcel like a portion of that all-intelligent Being whom we call the universal Soul, or the Brahman. In Vedanta, you will find that all living souls are called the children of immortal Bliss, and we are not born in sin and iniquity, but are children of God.

That is not the ultimate point of realization of our true nature. There are stages much higher than that stage of realization that we are children of God. When we begin to understand the meaning of 'child of God', we will understand that there is intrinsic unity and extrinsic variety, as there is variety in the relation of earthly children to their parents, and that intrinsic unity will remain very prominent in the end, and external variety will vanish, because that is only on the outward surface. We are closely related to God, more closely than we can think of.

Here is description of the Brahman, whom we must consider as the Absolute. We use the word 'Absolute', but few understand the meaning of this word. 'Absolute' is beyond all rela-

tivity. Relativity is that which is within time, space, and laws of causation, and, therefore, that is relative, and when it is beyond those three conditions, that is the Absolute, and everything that is within these conditions, is phenomenal or material and mental, and may be called relative also. And relative ones are subject to decaying and death.

We must remember that God is not relative, because He is beyond time, space and laws of causation. He is beyond of other laws that are working on different planes of existence. The perishable region is called the material existence. That which perishes, is material and physical. What is it that perishes? Anything that is within time and space and subject to the law of causation, perishes. When we use the word matter, we should remember that it is anything that is subject to time, space, and causation. The Universal Soul, or the Cosmic Ego, is divine. The question is asked as to what is the material and what is the divine? The material is that which perishes and has beginning and is subject to death and that which ends. Everything that has beginning, must end sooner or later, and that which has no end, had no beginning.

The Universal Soul, or the Cosmic Ego, is divine. Now what is this Cosmic Ego? We do not know what this Cosmic Ego is, but we have an idea of the individual ego, or soul. All living creatures have an individual soul. If we can imagine the egos as separate entities and take them collectively and put them all together and make one universal ego, the sum total of all individual egos will be the Cosmic Ego, and that Cosmic Ego is the Universal Soul i.e. the soul of the universe. The Absolute could not be the soul of the universe, as the Absolute is beyond all relativity. When we speak of the soul of the universe, we come down to the phenomenal plane and speak of the relation of the Absolute to the phenomenal world. Advaita Vedanta does not also admit the pure Absolute as cause and ground of the universe, though the Absolute is conceived sometimes as the source of the universe.

He who dwells in the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in the planets, in space and time, and in all objects of the universe, and rules them by living within or dwelling in all beings, that ruler and governor is the Cosmic Ego. Just in the same way as the soul of the individual is the ego, it is also the ruler and governor

of the individual body. You are the ruler of your body and there is no one outside of you. The individual ego is dwelling in the body and at the same time, is ruling and governing the body and directing the mind and different organs, and that individual ego may be called the ruler and governor of the individual body. So the Cosmic Ego is the ruler and governor of the cosmos, and that is the divine plane, and Sri Krishna says: "I myself am the director in the body and the governor of all fruits of works. I am the director of the mind, sense organs, senses, and I am the soul of the individual souls, the Divine Being".⁸ Here Sri Krishna has used the words, *Akshara*, *Parama-Brahman*, *Svabhava*, *Adhyatma*, *Visarga* and *Karma*. *Akshara* is really known as the *Parama-Brahman*. *Adhyatma* means the soul which exists in every living beings and in everything and becomes the enjoyer of the results of all works living in the material body. *Svabhava* means the individual soul (*jiva*), which is really the Brahman, or *Atman*, but takes the form of individual soul (for *maya*) and remains as a part of the Brahman. *Visarga* is oblation of materials like butter, wheat, cake etc. to the sacrificial fire (*dravya-tyaga* or *yajna*). Sacrifice (*yajna*) is the primal seed from which everything of the universe, sentient and insentient, evolve.

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।

भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥८॥३

Sankara said:

“‘अक्षरं’ न क्षरतीति पर आत्मा * * । तस्यैव परस्य ब्रह्मणः प्रतिदेहं प्रत्यगात्मभावः स्वभावः । * * ‘विसर्गः’ विसर्जनं देवतोद्देशेन चरु-पुरोडाशादेः द्रवस्य परित्यागः—स एव विसर्गलक्षणो यज्ञः कर्मसंज्ञितः कर्मशद्वित इत्येतत् ।”

Sridhara Swami said:

“स्वस्य एव ब्रह्मण एव अंशतया जीवरूपेण भवनं स्वभावः । * * स एव आत्मानं देहं अधिकृत्य भोक्तृत्वेन वर्तमानोऽध्यात्मशब्देन उच्यते ।”

Madhusudana Sarasvati said :

“अक्षरं न क्षरतीत्यविनाशि अश्रुते वा सर्वमिति सर्वव्यापकम् । * * यदक्षरं ब्रह्मेत्युक्तं, तस्यैव स्वभावः स्वो भावः स्वरूपं प्रत्यक्चैतन्यं न तु स्वस्य भाव इति षष्ठीसमासः लक्षणाप्रसङ्गात्, * * तस्माच्च ब्रह्मणः सम्बन्धि किन्तु ब्रह्मस्वरूपमेव ।”

In the fourth verse, Sri Krishna says to Arjuna: "All the perishable things, material bodies, senses, etc. are known as *Adhibhuta*, because those material things hold every individual being. The First-born Lord or Hiranyagarbha is known as *Adhidevata*. *Adhidarva* means the presiding Deity of all the deities ; and I am known as *Adhiyajna* living in the bodies of all individuals. I am also known as *Antarayami* i.e. I rule or dominate over everyone and everything living inside the ((material) body. *Adhiyajna* means the conductor of the sacrificial works and also the giver of the fruits or results of those works".⁴ In fact, Sri Krishna says that I myself, the *Atman* or Brahman, is the cause and ground of everything of the universe, and that *Atman* or Brahman pervades everything with Its intelligence, bliss and consciousness. Now, when a great teacher like Sri Krishna, or Christ, or Buddha, speaks about himself, he speaks not in the same way as an ordinary mortal does, but whenever he says 'I', 'me' and 'mine', he refers to the divine nature of the individual soul which is the Soul of our souls, and He is the director of all works, mental and physical, and He is the governor of all fruits of all works.

There are not many divinities, but there is one universal or absolute Divinity, and when that absolute Divinity is considered as beyond all relativity, He is considered as the imperishable and immortal One. When He is related to the universe as all-pervading and phenomenal, He becomes the universal soul, and when He is related to the individual ego He is the director of all mental and physical works as well as the governor of all fruits. But you should not separate these three manifesta-

⁴ अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदेवतम् ।

अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥८॥४

Sankara said

“अधिभूतं” प्राणिजातमधिकृत्य भवतीति । कोऽसौ क्षरः क्षरतीति ‘क्षरः’ विनाशी ‘भावो’ यत्किञ्चित् जनिमद् वस्तु इत्यर्थः । ‘पुरुषः’ पूर्णमनेन सर्वमिति पुरश्चयनाद्वा पुरुष आदित्यान्तर्गतः हिरण्यगर्भः सर्वप्राणिकरणानामनुग्राहकः सोऽधिदेवतम् * * १”

Madhusudana Sarasvati said :

“पुरुषो हिरण्यगर्भः समष्टिलिङ्गात्मा व्यष्टिसर्वकरणानुग्राहकः * * १”

tions from one another. In Vedanta, God is considered as related to the universe. He is called in the Bible: "The First-born Lord of the universe" i.e. He is the first manifestation of the Absolute. Really the Absolute is beyond all relativity, beyond the universe, and beyond nature, and God may be known as the ruler of the universe. So where there is manifestation of phenomenal or natural objects and as ruler or governor of that manifestation, there is God. The Absolute is not the same as the creator, as described in the Genesis, who created the world in six days and then rested, but God is the projector and out of his own body starts the process of evolution. God does not create out of nothing, but nature forms a part of his being, or nature is the material out of which God manufactures all these phenomenal forms.⁵

"Whoever at the time of death meditates on Me as the director of all works and governor of all fruits of works, departing from the body, undoubtedly he reaches My Being".⁶ Anyone who at the time of death, can think of his divine nature as the director and ruler of his body and the governor of all fruits or results of actions, not thinking of anything else, but being entirely absorbed in that meditation or thought of the Divine Being, can pass away in that way, reaching the Divine Being. He reaches the Divinity, there is no doubt about it. So we see how important it is. If we think of God, we obtain Him and we become the part and parcel of Him. If we think of Him constantly with strong desire and have a tremendous longing to reach Him and if we meditate on Him, we enter into His being, and this is the whole secret of religion.

If we wish to find God and think of Him as dwelling in ourselves, then we enter into His being. If we are ready to enter into His being in this life, it will be easier, because, at the time of death, when our sense powers and mind become weak, it

⁵ The conception of non-dualistic i.e. Advaita-Vedanta is this that Absolute is the formless indeterminate (*nirākāra nirguna*) Brahman which transcends *maya* i.e. time, space, and causation. God, the creator, is the first manifestation of the absolute Brahman

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्ता कलेवरम् ।

यः प्रयासि स मद्भावं याति नास्तस्य संशयः ॥८१५॥

Vide in this connection the commentary of Madhusudana Sarasvati.

will be difficult to enter into Him i.e. to be part and parcel of Him. All the tendencies will wake up and force us to enter into another channel. But if, on the contrary, we constantly think of our true divine nature during our healthy state of mind and body, it will be perfectly easy during the time of death to enter into Him. When mind and memory are fading away, we will not be able to meditate on our true nature. If our body is destroyed and if we are conscious of the divine plane, then we will enter into His being. That is the secret of reaching God after death.

If one wishes to go to heaven and tries to enjoy the pleasures after death, that will be different. According to Vedanta philosophy, heavens are not the highest places, or not the highest realms of existence. They are phenomenal and are subject to time, space, and causation, and therefore, they are perishable. You may go to heavens and enjoy the pleasures of life for a certain period, or that may last for millions of years, but still there will be an end, and after that period you will be subject to other conditions. The wise men of the East understood the nature of heaven and hell, and even the highest heavens they rejected, because they knew and understood that no matter how high the heavens and celestial regions can be, they cannot be on the plane of the spaceless and timeless Absolute. They must be on the plane of relativity and, therefore, they must be subject to time and must have an end. Therefore Vedanta does not hold that going to heavens is the highest ideal of religion, but it teaches us the attainment of Godconsciousness. It teaches us to enter into the being of God, and that is the highest achievement, and that we should strive for.

The question is how one can reach God at the time of death, and Sri Krishna has said that whoever at the time of death, meditating on the director of the works of the body and governor of all fruits of works, departs from the body, undoubtedly he reaches His Divine being. He does not say here about the individual self. He does not say that he who departs from the body by thinking of the individual self, enters into the Divine being, which is the Soul of all individual souls. If you think of the individual self, you are not supposed to enter into that state, but you will be

on the phenomenal plane. When one gives up the attachment to the body and leaves it as a shell, as you leave an old garment, when it is worn out, he attains to that Divine Being. The wise men often leave their bodies. They are not dead, but they separate the soul from the bodies ; and they can separate by withdrawing the mind from the body also, just as we withdraw our minds from things which we do not want any more.

Here Sri Krishna describes one of the most universal laws: "O Kaunteya, whatsoever being condition one strongly thinks of at the time of death, even that he obtains, being absorbed in the thought of that".⁷ If you think of Christ, or if you think of some other being at the time of death, you will go to that being. If you think of the Absolute and are absorbed in the Absolute at the time of death, you will be one with the Absolute. This is one of the laws, "what thou thinkest, thou shalt become at the end". We have become He (the *Atman*), because we have been thinking of Him. So we can become divine if we think of the divine side and forget the human side. If we think of our sinful nature, we become sinful. If we constantly hold the thought that we are sinners, we become sinners. If we think of ourselves as children of God, we become children of God. Thought-power is the greatest power in the universe. If you think of some object, such an object you will get sooner or later. It depends upon the strength of the thought. If it be tremendously strong, you will get it quicker. If you do not get it in this incarnation, you will get it in the next. It is bound to come, and upon that principle is based the theory of prayer. Prayer is demanding and thinking of a thing. Vedanta says that prayer is fulfilled before you pray and it brought its result. So whatsoever being or condition one strongly thinks of at the time of death, even that he obtains. If he thinks of his relatives and friends, he will remain earth-bound, and perhaps he will communicate

यं यं वापि स्मरन् भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।

तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावाभावितः ॥८१६

Here Sri Krishna has mentioned about thought of any object, or of any diety :

with them if he has a desire or he wishes to go to the departed spirits of his relatives or parents, he will go there. He may be born somewhere else, perhaps he will meet them even after they are born.

So it is very necessary for each one of us to remember this inevitable law, because this is one of the most vital conditions of our existence, and we should know it, because we create our own destiny and future according to our thoughts. Therefore, we should learn this and hold it in our mind: "What thou thinkest, thou doest obtain, no matter how good or bad it is; it is bound to come". That thought must be very strong. In our ordinary every-day life, how many things we are thinking of, but these are passing thoughts. But if we make one of them vital, like the thoughts of a miser who does nothing but collects and holds money and does not think of anything else but money, we will be born as a miser again. Wherever there is wealth, we will be attracted, because our whole being is absorbed in that thought, and that kind of thought is what is meant here. If we think of a certain disease in this life for a certain length of time, we will get it. We have created the germs and attracted them and developed them in us. So if we think of some great character, or some noble quality, and hold that in our mind, we will find that we are developing our character in that form, and that is the reason why we attain to God by such process as the meditation on the divine nature, or on the divine heart of some being like Krishna, or Buddha, or Christ, because by thinking of such characters we mould our character into that shape sooner or later.

"Therefore, if this is the universal law at all times, meditate on Me and fight and perform your duties; perform all the duties of life and having commended thy heart and soul to me, thou shalt doubtless attain to Me" says Sri Krishna.⁸ This instruction was given in the battle-field just before the

* तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्माभिवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥८॥७

The words 'मयि' and 'माम्' indicate the Absolute Being, the *Atman* or *Brahman*.

beginning of the great battle, and Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to fight, because it was his duty as a general on the battle-field. He advised him to fight, and that was in reference to the duty. That word 'fight' stands for all the vocations and all conditions of life. "Therefore, at all times meditate on Me and perform your duties. Having commended thy heart and soul to Me thou shalt doubtless attain to Me". Sri Krishna instructs all to meditate upon any choosen deity (*Istha*), or upon the *Atman*, at all times to create a habit (*abhyāsa*), and then renunciation (*vairāgya*) will automatically come. Repeated thinking is necessary. So give your whole heart and soul to the Supreme Being, live in the world wherever you are, and fulfil the duties of your life diligently and with patience and pre-severance, but at the same time keep your mind on God. Do this to create a habit so that at the time of death you will be able to be absorbed in the thought of God, so that after the death of the body you will be able to enter into His being. Whatever ideal you may have, take any such ideal, Krishna, Buddha or Christ. Vedānta never mentions any particular form, but it takes in every thing, and makes it universal. Practice is necessary, and in order to get the result of practice, you should practise every day or every hour if you can. You should practise at all times even when you are in business. Even when you are walking in the street instead of having your attention drawn to the show cases in the shops, think of something higher and more permanent than these trivial things which are passing away every day, because they will not do any good to your soul. You are making fools of yourselves by thinking in that way. You never think of understanding the laws which govern your souls, or what is your life, or where you will go after this life. Can there be any condition more miserable than that? You have become self-deluded, and full of fear and trouble. You must wake up, and instead of living like babies you must learn to stand on your feet so that you will be able to face the eternity, not shutting your eyes to truth, because falsehood will pass away and truth will still endure.

These vanities do not amount to anything. You must learn this law that thought moulds your character, and you mould your own being and make your future destiny. If you say that you cannot think of God all the time, it is because

your mind is impure and goes to trivial things. So perform the duties of your life diligently, and practise every day. Spend some time every day in thinking of your divine nature, then you will get into a good harmony, and your mind will be purified. First, when you sit quietly in a corner of your house and think of the things that will be in your mind, and you will think that you are in the stores, and you will be lost in those trivial thoughts, and you will not be able to find yourself. Drive these thoughts out of your mind, and think of God and of nothing else. Do this for a few days, and see how difficult it is for you, because you are not in the habit of doing so. That difficult thing must be accomplished sooner or later, otherwise what is going to happen? You cannot destroy the laws that there is such a thing as a soul, and you are dying every day. Every seventh year every particle of your body changes, and a new body is formed, still you are thinking you are sons of Mr. and Mrs. So and so.

Sri Krishna says: "O the son of Prithu, meditating with a mind engaged in practical devotion and not thinking of anything else, one goes to the Supreme Spirit".⁹ These are the conditions: meditating with a mind engaged in practical devotion and not thinking of anything else when you fix your attention on the Divine Self, who is the director of your body and mind, you must not think of anything else, but should practise that, and make that a habit, not that you should do it for a few days and give it up and go to doing something else. Keep it up for you as you do not know at what time your death is coming. Always be prepared for death. If death comes and takes you suddenly, you should be ready to go into

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।

परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥८।८

Madhusudana Sarasvati said :

“अभ्यासयोगः । आभ्यासः सजातीयप्रत्ययप्रवाहो मयि विजातीयप्रत्ययानन्तरितं षष्ठे प्राग्व्याख्यातः ; स एव योगः समाधिस्तेन युक्तं तथैव व्यापृतं आत्माकारवृत्ती-तरवृत्तिशून्यं सच्चेतस्तेन चेतसा अभ्यासपाटवेन नान्यगामिना न अत्र विषयान्तरे निरोधप्रयत्नं विनापि गन्तुं शीलमसेति तेन परमं निरनिशयं पुरुषं पूर्णं * * ।”

The word मयि in the commentary means आत्मनि ।

the being of the Supreme Spirit. Nothing will keep you on this plane, or hinder your progress in spiritual advancement, but that idea should be cultivated.

“Whoever meditateth at the time of death upon Him who is the omniscient ruler, the subtlest of the subtle, the supporter of unthinkable nature, the self-effulgent living sun and beyond the darkness of ignorance. Whoever meditateth at the time of death upon that Supreme Being with a steady mind endowed with devotion and power of Yoga, the mind and vital air being fixed between the eyebrows, he reaches that Supreme Spirit Divine”.¹⁰ This is the way a Yogi passes away. You have heard of a Yogi giving up his body voluntarily. He will do without his body. Just as we throw away an old garment, he gives up his body when he knows that his time has come. Before we describe the process we must understand those attributes. The Supreme Being is called a poet.

God is considered to be the universal poet and His poetry is the phenomenal world—“*kāvīm purāṇam*” etc. The sun and the moon are His poetry. So is this body, this human form, and all forms that exist, are just poetical conceptions of the Supreme Being. Therefore, He is omniscient; He knows everything. He is ancient, because He has had no beginning. The phenomenal world had beginning, the sun and the moon had beginning, and all physical entities have their beginning, but the absolute Spirit has no beginning. Therefore, He is the most ancient, and yet He is new, because nothing is new to Him. He is the new all the time. I have explained how He rules the universe, being the universal soul. “He is the subtlest of the

¹⁰

कवि पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयं समनुष्मरेद् यः ।

सर्वस्य धातागमचिन्त्यरूपमादियवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥

प्रयाणकाले मनसोऽचलेन

भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।

भ्रवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक्

स तं परं पुरुषमुपेति दिव्यम् ॥८।९-१०

“‘कवि’ क्रान्तदृशिनं तेनानोतानागनाद्यशेषवस्तुदृशिःत्वेन सर्वज्ञं ; पुराणं चिरन्तनं सर्वकारणत्वादनादिमिति यावत् ।”—Madhusudana Sarasvati.

subtle and the smallest of the small''. The atom is the smallest thing that you can conceive of. Even that atom is like a body which holds the Supreme Spirit. How fine that Supreme Being must be in order to dwell in the body of an atom. Therefore He is smaller than the smallest, yet He is the largest, because the sun is much larger than the earth. He dwells there also, and every particle is pervaded by that Almighty Being. So is the earth; so are the skies. God is the supporter of all, because He divides the works of all living beings, and gives the results of all works to all. We cannot think of Him, because our thoughts cannot reach Him. Our thoughts go up to a certain point, and there they separate. He is beyond all intellect. We can think of Him as related to us by images, or assuming certain phases or attributes we think of Him.

He is self-effulgent like the sun-light. He illumines the sun, and makes us feel the existence of the sun. He is more self-effulgent than the sun, and does not need any light of any other being or form, but He is the light of the universe, beyond the darkness of ignorance. Which is the darkness of ignorance? It is in the sense of those who do not know Him; it is like a veil, as if you shut yourself in the closet of a room, the sun will be beyond that room.

Similarly, if you think of your body as a closet where a soul is imprisoned and the door is shut, you do not see the divine rays of the self-effulgent sun. So you go beyond the darkness of ignorance. That is the condition. You are in ignorance, because you do not know God. When you have seen the self-effulgent light of God, you have peace and happiness, and have no trouble, no anxiety, no worry, no misery, and no desire for worldly things. Then you are perfectly happy, being contented and divine. But you are not so at present, and you must feel the difference. He who meditates on this Divine Being at the time of death with a steady mind endowed with devotion and through the practice of Raja Yoga, fixing the mind and vital air (*prāna*) between the eyebrows, can attain to God. Just behind the *prāna*, is the celestial region in the body. If you can put your mind there, you rise above the material plane which is below the neck. If you draw the life-force or vital air back out of the heart and let it enter into that space between the eyebrows after closing the eyes, then

you will be able to realize something which you have never before realized in this life. Then you will go that state of self-consciousness where all delusion will vanish, and if you can pass away at that time, you will enter into the being of the Almighty Spirit. We will describe more fully the process by which one can enter into the abode of the absolute Being through the process of Yoga in the next chapter. Those who have studied Raja Yoga, will understand what Sri Krishna means to say in these verses

CHAPTER XXXI

AKSHARA-BRAHMA-YOGA

The ideal of Vedanta is the one Universal Spirit which is called in Sanskrit, Brahman. The word Brahman really means vast, infinite, and eternal, etc.—बृहत्वात् इति ब्रह्म । We heard already something of the attributes of that infinite Brahman. It is beautifully described in verses ninth and tenth of the eighth chapter of the *Gita*: प्रयाणकाले मनसोऽचलेन * * etc. i.e., whoever meditates, at the time of death upon Him who is the omniscient ancient ruler, the subtlest of the subtle, the supporter and sustainer of all unthinkable nature, self-effulgent like the sun, and beyond the darkness of ignorance, with a steady mind endowed with devotion and exercising the will by the power of Yoga, keeping the life-breath between the eyebrows, reaches that Supreme Divine Spirit, and this is the method by which the Yogis attain to the Absolute at the time of death. Now Sri Krishna says:

‘योगवलेन चैव, ब्रह्मोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक्’ ।

Between the eyebrows there is a plexus known as *Ajñā* (*ajñā-chakra*), and inside that *chakra* shines the *Gurupadma*. Yogis concentrate their mind in that *chakra*. The Yogis thus go beyond all relativity, and that is the highest goal of all religions.

It may not be expressed as found in Christianity and other religions, which consider going to heaven as the highest goal. According to Vedanta, going to heaven is one of the goals, but not the highest, because from heaven there is a fear to fall on the earth again.

The Brahman is the all-pervading Spirit. It is beyond all relativity as it dwells within, but we do not know it. The moment we come to know or realize the true nature of that Brahman, we become free from all bondages, rise above suffering, sorrow, disease and death and attain to perfection even in this life. In the Vedas, we read the description of this Brahman. It had been known in ancient India by the sages long before religion was known in any other country. The

highest ideal of the Vedas, which is the most ancient scriptures of the Hindus, is that Brahman and the attainment of that Brahman, and, in the *Upanishads*, which are the best and rationalistic portions of the Vedas, this ideas has been beautifully described.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is like a commentary upon the *Upanishads*, nay, the extract of all the *Upanishads*, and therefore, it forms one of the three books of the Vedanta philosophy. The Vedanta philosophy has no founder, yet the spiritual instructors, sages, and Incarnations of God supported the idea of Vedanta, and explained it in various ways. And this *Bhagavad Gita* contains the explanations given by Sri Krishna, who lived 1400 years before Christ. He quotes from the Vedas and *Upanishads* which are included in the text-books of the Vedanta philosophy.

“That indestructible One is spoken of by the Seers of the Vedas and is reached by those who are self-controlled and free from passion and desire and also lead the godly life, and that goal I will declare unto thee in brief.”¹ That One is spoken of by the knowers of the Vedas, and all the wise men of all countries have spoken of that absolute Being. The most ancient philosophers of Greece and the German philosophers have spoken of that Absolute, and no one can destroy that One which is reached by those who are self-controlled and free from passion.

There are two conditions by which one attains to that absolute truth or reality. We must practise self-control, and become free from passions, because passions (intense desire) drag us down to the delusive material plane, and keep us away from God. If the self gets ahead of us, we are miserable, and

¹ यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति, विशन्ति यद् यतयो वीतरागः ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति, तत ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥८॥११

The *Katha Upanishad* also says,

सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमाप्नुवन्ति, तर्पांसि सर्वाणि च यद्वदन्ति ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति, तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीन्योमित्येत ॥११॥१५

‘Brahmacharya that consists either in residence (for study), or in the house of the teacher or some other kind (i.e. lifelong celibacy), is meant for the Brahman-knowledge.’—*Sankara*.

then we are all extremely selfish, and do everything with selfish motives, which are not right. That kind of doing (*karma*) does not lead to any absolute good anywhere. Anything done, or any act performed through selfish motives, do not bring the highest result. Therefore, we must control our mind, because when the mind is disturbed, no absolute truth can be realized.

First, we should learn self-control, and try to become free from passions. Therefore, it is said: "The absolute Truth is reached by those who are self-controlled and free from passions and desires, and who lead a godly life." There is no earthly incentive to leading a godly life. You cannot get money or beautiful furniture by leading a godly life. So the incentive must be higher, and it is the higher aspirations of the soul to reach the absolute perfection, and to be free from all anxieties, worries, and sorrows, even when we are living in the body. Therefore, we should try to lead a godly life, and through that living, eventually we would come to such a realization.

"That goal I will declare to thee in brief"—'तत् ते पदं ग्रहेण प्रवक्षे'। * *. Having pronounced this Sri Krishna first wants to explain the method by which one, at the time of death, should depart in order to attain to that perfection, and absolute freedom. And so he here describes this: "Having closed the doors of the senses, having confined the mind in the heart, and having the life breath fixed in the head between the eyebrows, and thus remaining steady in concentration by Yoga, he who leaves the body by uttering the one syllable 'OM' and meditating on the meaning of the Supreme Being, the eternal Brahman, reaches the supreme goal."² One should learn to

²

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।

मूर्च्छायाद्यात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥

उमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुस्मरन् ।

यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥८१२१३॥

Sankara said :

"परस्य ब्रह्मणो वाचकरूपेण प्रतिमावत्प्रतीकरूपेण च परब्रह्मप्रतिपत्तिसाधनत्वेन मन्दमध्यमबुद्धिनां विवक्षितस्य ॐकारस्य उपासनं कालान्तरे मुक्तिफलमुक्तं यत्तदेव * * ।"

do this having closed the doors of the senses. To be self-controlled is one of the conditions. Self-control consists in controlling the senses, sense-powers, and the mind. 'Having closed the doors of the senses' says Sri Krishna, and this is just the same as the saying of Jesus the Christ, 'go into thy closet and shut the door'. In India, we do not take it in the lower sense, which the Western people generally do. Go into closet and shut the door. There is a deeper meaning here. The body is the closet, and if you wish to pray to God, close the doors of the senses, and then God will listen to your prayers, and not until then. But real sincerity is necessary in controlling the mind. When the doors of the senses are closed, there may be a fight in your mind, or there may be anxiety. Then you will have to confine the mind in the heart. Otherwise the life-breath may be disturbed. It may be excited, or may be in a different state of vibration. It may not be under control, and that may upset the mind and mental condition. So keep the mind in the heart and try to fix the life-breath in the head through the breathing exercises. This could be done by gaining control over the *prana* (vital air) and by concentrating the mind, and not on any mental thing, but upon the Supreme Spirit.

Regarding the verse thirteenth, Madhusudana Sarasvati said

“* * तेन प्रणवं जपस्तदभिधेयभूतञ्च मां चिन्तयन्मुद्घन्यया नाढ्या देहं त्यजन्
यः प्रयाति, स याति देवयानमार्गेण ब्रह्मलोकं गत्वा तद्भोगान्ते परमां प्रकृष्टां गतिं
मद्द्रुपाम्। अत्र पतञ्जलिना 'तीव्रसंवेगानामासन्नः' समाधिलाभः इत्युक्ता ईश्वरप्रणि-
धानाद्वा' इत्युक्तम्। प्रणिधानं व्याख्यातं 'तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः'। तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनं
इति 'समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात्' इति च। इह तु साक्षादेव ततः परमगतिलाभ
इत्युक्तम्।”

Now, Sri Krishna has said about *krama-mukti* (gradual march towards liberation) through *yoga-sādhana*. A Yogi controls his mind and senses, concentrates upon the Pranava, which is considered as *vāchaka* or pointer or indicator of the *nirguna*-Brahman (Pranava being the *saguna*-Brahman) and after attaining *samādhi*, he enters into the abode of infinite silence and bliss. But, in the Vedantic *Sādhana*, a *Sādhaka* attains *jivanmukti* (liberation even in this life) through the processes of *shravana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. In the Vedantic *Sādhana*, there is no question of any kind of yogic *samādhi*.

You should utter the one syllable OM, because that is the name (symbol) of the Supreme Being. There is no other word which could express so much and could contain all expressions and ideas as this word OM, because it contains all the truths of science; and those who have read Raja Yoga, have understood the aphorisms of Patanjali, which are very clearly explained by Swami Vivekananda: "His name is the word OM." (तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः) । The sense of this word will be explained afterwards.

If you utter that word (a simple utterance would not do) you will have to think of its meaning, and meditate on the meaning of OM, which is the absolute infinite Being, the all-pervading Spirit, the Life of our life, the Soul of our souls, the source of intelligence, existence, and consciousness as well as the foundation of existence or being. We should know that, and concentrate our mind upon that, not upon the word only, but upon the meaning of the word³ and gradually we come to the realization and reach the goal. Here we have said that when a realized soul leaves the body, at the time of death he understands that he is not the same as the body i.e. he (i.e. *Atman*) is separate from the material body. Death in the sense of destruction is not to be understood here. The soul is separate from the body and at the same time it is dwelling in the body. In India, when we say a person is dead, we say, he has left the gross material body. If one said, he is dead, it is considered to be extremely rude and improper. Really he is not dead. He is living in his finer soul form (*sukshma-sharira*) and not in his material form. That you should understand, and that idea is very strong in India. We really destroy the material body after death, and do not try to preserve it by embalming it like the Egyptians. We cremate it, because the soul is free and have no attachment to the material form in which it lives.

By 'closing the doors of the senses' we mean that we should not heed the senses. Even if our eyes are wide open, we should not be seeing anything, and if anyone touches our body, we should not feel it. Still we are not losing our consciousness.

³ Patanjali said: 'तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम्' i.e. when you will mutter the universal *mantram* OM, think and meditate upon its meaning, the *Ishtam*.

'That is the meaning of the words 'closing the doors of the senses' This can be done by practising Raja Yoga. In the *Patanjaladarshana*, Patanjali has elaborately explained this practice

We can withdraw our mind from the body entirely. We would not then see any object, nor feel a touch at the time of meditation. Then we can know that our concentration is perfect, and that can be accomplished. That should be the ideal which we should keep before our mind, and should struggle hard until we should attain to that. Having confined the mind within the heart we should not think of anything else and nor should remember what has happened, or is going to happen. We should not be concerned with anything that has to do with our business affairs or relatives or friends at the time of meditation. These worldly thoughts and ideas should not rise in the mind, but still we should have perfect consciousness, undisturbed peace, and a restful state. We can attain to that state, but not in right away. It may take a long time to learn to do it. We may think that would not be the highest ideal, because all thoughts, impressions, and ideas are not present at that time. If you want to enter into the kingdom of the Absolute, you will have to rise above the dual manifestations of the pleasant and the unpleasant, then you will know what bliss and true happiness are. God is above the pleasant and the unpleasant. He is rather the witness (*Saksi*) of everything dual.

But who cannot attain to that state of the Absolute right away, what shall he do then? He will constantly think of the Supreme Being. "Whoever constantly thinks of my eternal being with a one-pointed mind, to such an ever-devoted Yogi I am easily accessible"⁴ Such a Yogi, whose mind is one-pointed and is always devoted to the Supreme Being, can reach or attain to that state very easily, and at the time of death he will be able to have his mind under perfect control and will

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥८११४

Patanjali said in the *Yogasutra*

‘स तु दीर्घकालनैरन्तर्यसत्कारोपासेवितो दृढभूमिरिति’ ।

enjoy eternal peace. Therefore, it is very necessary that we should constantly think of or meditate upon the Absolute, even when we are doing other works of our life, if we have the desire to attain to perfection in this life. The very desire will make us do so, but that desire is very rare. People may do anything for accomplishing smaller ends, but they are very slow in trying to accomplish that which is the highest, and that is the great trouble amongst us.

We can go from one part of the world to another to get money, or to accomplish some trivial end, which will not last long, but we cannot do anything to know our true nature, or for the realization of the highest peace and happiness in this life, or for reaching perfection, because these are not tangible. Anything that is tangible and under the reach of the senses, is very attractive. If anything is intangible and beyond the reach of our senses, it seems to be very unattractive, and, therefore, God is so unattractive to us. We may ask, 'what would it be to that person if God were easily accessible and what would be the utility?' "Those high-souled ones (*Mahānāṭman*) who attain to me, reach perfection and are no longer subject to rebirth in this transitory abode of misery, and this would be the gain. He would not have to come back again." But it would not be a gain for those who are anxious to come back and continue these pleasures which last only for a few seconds. Those who are tired of these things and have their desires satiated and ambitions fulfilled, do not care to live here in this world of relativity, but they want to have the realization of the Absolute, and they, after reaching that state, will not come back.

This idea of not coming back to this earth is very strong amongst the wise men of all countries. They do not want to

⁵ मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गता ॥८१५॥

‘मां प्राप्य सिद्धिं गता इति वदतोपासकानां क्रममुक्तिर्दृशिता’ * * * *

said Madhusudana Sarasvatī. The Upāsakas or ordinary Sādhakas attain God-realization through gradual process, after purification of their mind or heart, but the Jñānis directly reach that absolute Abode through the process of discrimination (*jñāna-vichāra*) or self-analysis.

come back, because they know what the world is. They learn this by experience, and then they try to get out of it, and do those things so that they will not have to come back again, and go through that experience once more. It is for this reason also that those whole-souled ones do not care to go to heaven. They think that by going to heaven they can avoid sin, misery, and suffering, which are very undesirable in this life. There may be other kinds of suffering too. That celestial pleasure would not last forever. How do you know that will last forever? You may say, 'it has been written in a book,' but how does the writer of the book know that? You cannot say who wrote the book, as this question does not rise in the minds of those who wish to go to heaven, but, in Vedānta, you will find the rational explanation regarding one's going to heaven and why that heaven would not be desirable.

Sri Krishna says: "O Arjuna, because it is not eternal, it is not permanent and, therefore, it is transitory. All realms, including the highest heaven of Brahmā, the Creator, are subject to returning again; but there is no rebirth for one who has attained to me, the Supreme Spirit."⁶

Going to heaven and attaining to Divine realization are two different things. All heavens, including the highest heaven of the Creator, are subject to returning again. If souls attain to the heaven, they enjoy the fruits of their good deeds for a certain period. That period may be indefinite, but still after the expiration of that period they will have to come back and go to some other realm. But those who have attained to the highest perfection, or attain to the Absolute, are not forced to come back from that state, and that would be the difference. Those who go to the highest heaven of the Creator (Brahmā), may remain there for an indefinite period and after the dissolution of the universe, when the heaven would be

आत्रङ्गमुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

सामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥८१९॥

The word **लोक** (*loka*) signifies seven kinds of *loka* *bhuh*, *bhuvah*, *svah*, *janah*, *mahah*, *tapah* and *satya* or *brahmaloka*. The *brahmaloka* means the region where Hiranyagarbha-Brahmā, the Creator of the world-process, exists or shines, but that region is included in the domain ofnescience (*ajñāna*).

destroyed, in the next cycle, perhaps, they will come back, and will be born again to reap the results of those deeds which did not produce results. If a man performs sinless deeds and is performing so many good deeds, perhaps, he will go to the heavens and enjoy the results of the good deeds for ten thousand years and after that he may have to reap the results of ten thousand evil deeds. And this will be inevitable, therefore, he will be bound to come back. But if any one has attained to the highest realization of the Absolute, at the end of the cycle, he will reach perfection (*mukti*) from that heaven, but that perfection would come to those only who have attained to the highest knowledge of the realization of the Supreme Being.

If that be the case, why do we try to go to heaven and enjoy temporary pleasure? Instead of doing that, why should we not try hard in this life to attain to the highest realization and not care for heaven? That is the idea very strong amongst the wise men of the East. They say that if realization of the Absolute be the highest, we should try to attain to that realization in this life, and should not waste our time by doing good deeds with the desire to reap the good results (of these deeds) in the form of enjoyment and pleasure in heaven.

There are two methods: one, by which perfection (*mukti*) can be reached directly in this life and the other, by which one is doing good deeds and going to heaven. Now, attaining to perfection through knowledge of the realization of the supreme absolute Being is the highest. Here the teacher Sri Krishna tries to explain day and night of the Creator. The day is our one cycle (of the Creator) of evolution, and His night is one cycle of involution. He is the creator, or starter, or projector of the phenomenal appearances through the process of evolution, as a day and a night. They are the knowers of day and night, who know that His day consists of one thousand cycle, and His night is also one thousand cycles.⁷

7

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्षद् ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥८१७॥

In order to understand the Creator's i.e. Brahmā's day, we should first start with our idea of night. Our one year would be one day of Brahmā, and His one year would be of 365 years, and His 10,000 years would be equal to 3,600,050,000 years which would include four *yugas*. Four *yugas* would be equal to 3,600,050,000 years according to our general calculation, and one thousand of these would make one day of the Creator. When I said our one year, that is one day of the *Devas* or angels who are higher than the human beings, but lower than the Creator; their one year would be our 365 years, and their 10,000 years would be equal to three million, six hundred and fifty years. Three million years would be the time we can imagine as the period of evolution, and after that time would come the period of involution of all grosser material forms. It would go through the subtle unmanifested state, and there would be another day of dissolution when the space would disappear also, and that comes very seldom, and takes a longer period.

They are the knowers of day and night, who knows that the Creator's day would consist of 3650 million of our years His night is also the same. The Hindu philosophers do not limit creation by one thousand years. This earth began millions of years ago.

They are said to be the knowers of day and night, because those who know only of our day and night, do not know day and night of the departed spirits. So when you ask me questions as to how the low departed spirits would remain earth-bound, how long they would be before they would return again, I often answer that they do not have the same period that we have. Our ideas of time is different from that of the departed spirits, as they are in another realm. The sun does not rise there and we must think of that. We are wrong to think that one can remain there and have the same idea of time as we have. Our idea of time is too gross. It is made to suit our convenience. It is artificial. If there be no rising or setting

In the *Vishnu-Purāna*, it has been mentioned. “चतुर्युगसहस्रं तु ब्रह्मणो दिनमुच्यते ।” About *yuga*, the *Purāna* has said that it is of four kinds, *satya*, *tretā*, *dvāpara*, and *kali*'.

of the sun, there would be no time, according to us in this universe.

At the back of Brahmā's day one cycle is followed by another and that again by another cycle, and so on and on naturally. God does not make any effort in creation. "At the back of Brahmā's day all manifestation proceed from the unmanifested, and at the approach of night they are dissolved into the unmanifested"⁸ The world has not come out of nothing. The whole material existed in the unmanifested state of potential force, and from that state it has come out into many forms, and that goes back into that energy which contains everything, and, therefore, this unmanifested is the material cause of the universe which is called nature. It is indestructible, and it has various names. In the Bible, it is said to be water, and in the writings of the Hindu philosophers it is also called water, as we have described it as the ocean of the causal state.⁹ Different epic mythologies (*Puranas*) have described the causal seed of creation as water (*Kāraṇa-salila*).

That causal state is indescribable. If you destroy this book, or tear it into pieces, or burn it, it would never go to nothing; and if you burn it and weigh all the gases and ashes, the chemical properties that will be left, would be equal to the weight of this book as it is today. It would be the same thing in weight and, although the book has disappeared the material will be there just the same. So the book will be involved into that state of elements, which may be called the

⁸ अव्यक्ताद् व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।

रात्र्यागमै प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥८१९८

“अव्यक्तात्—अव्यक्तं प्रजापतेः स्वापावस्था, तस्मादव्यक्तात् ‘व्यक्तयः’ व्यज्यन्ते इति व्यक्तयः स्थावरजङ्गमलक्षणाः सर्वाः * * ।”

The word '*avyakta*' or 'the unmanifested' means the state of dream of the Prajāpati, and does not mean *avyākṛta*, the causal state of *Isvara*.

⁹ In the *Puranas*, the unmanifested or *avyakta* has been called the causal water (*Kāraṇa-salila*). This causal water is the causal nescience (*Kāraṇa-ajñāna*) that remains with (or associates with) *Isvara*, the Second Principle, who is really not contaminated with the causal nescience, but is the Lord of *māyā* (*Māyādhishā*). *Isvara* and *māyā* (causal nescience) have been described in the *Purānas* as Nārāyana and Lakshmi, and Lakshmi is at the feet of Nārāyana (*Māyādhishā*).

undifferentiated (*avyakta*), and when these elements would be put together in the process of evolution, they will take another form, and, perhaps, be another book again after millions of years.

So we must know that the Creator wakes up, as it were, at the beginning of a cycle of evolution, and when involution starts at the time of dissolution, He sleeps. The Creator is not the creator all the time. He is the creator at one time and then He is the destroyer, and a beautiful illustration is given of time. As the spider brings out the thread from his own body and destroys it, so the Creator Brahmā brings out the thread of the phenomenal world and destroys it at the time of dissolution. Day is followed by night and night is followed by day. This is a beautiful illustration of day and night.

If you think of evolution and involution, you think of day and night of the Creator, and the same world of beings evolving and going to causal state again and again out of the unmanifested. It has been forced to involve and disperse at the approach of night¹⁰. All these beings which we are seeing today on this earth, we can imagine, at the time of dissolution they will remain unmanifested for millions of years. Then they will wake up again, just as seed is covered by snow during the winter months, it does not die, but remains latent, and when the summer follows, it wakes up and brings forth a plant. So the souls will remain latent in the potential or germ state at the time of dissolution, and will wake up again and begin in their courses, and nothing is destroyed.

The Creator Brahmā creates the sun, moon, and stars and also creates the sky, earth and ether as they existed in other cycles.¹¹ This sun represents the sun of previous evolu-

¹⁰ भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्याहरागमे ॥८१९॥

¹¹ In the Rigveda, it has been said-

“सूर्याचन्द्रमसो धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत् दिवश्च पृथिवीं चान्तरीक्षमथो स्वः ।”

The *Vedāntasūtra* says-

“समाननामरूपत्वादावृत्तावप्यविरोधो दर्शनात् स्मृतेश्च” (१।३।७०) ।

¹² परस्तस्मात् तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽवकात् सनातनः ।

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नाशयत्तु न विनश्यति ॥८२०॥

tions, which must have lasted may millions of years before this evolution began. So, as these beings which existed in the previous cycle, gradually came out, because different grades of evolution are settled. The steps of evolution are fixed. One state would lead to another and that to another. We cannot change the regular course of nature, and, therefore, similar things will come out or evolve. Minerals, animals, and all human beings are in different steps and they will come out one after another, and will go back again to causal state.

But beyond this causal state there is something still higher which we shall learn. "Beyond that undifferentiated causal state there is another eternal Being who does not perish when all creatures are destroyed."¹² First of all, get an idea of this phenomenal universe and think of this causal state in the state of undifferentiated energy. Beyond that energy there is something still higher. That energy is subject to evolution, and that which is beyond this causal state, is not subject to evolution. "That Being is called the Imperishable. It is declared to be the higher goal and My supreme being is that, having attained to which, none returns"¹³ The highest abode of the Supreme Deity is that, attaining which no one returns. No one is subject to evolution when he attains to the Supreme Deity, and then you go beyond the process of evolution. You have travelled from one cycle to another, and that which is beyond this conscious state, you can know, and that is far from the process of evolution. And when you have known it, you have reached the climax of evolution.

That perishable something is called by different names. That Supreme Spirit is beyond nature and is also beyond the material cause of the universe, in which all beings abide and from which all the universe can be understood. There is no second. That kind of devotion is necessary for reaching the Supreme Deity, the imperishable absolute One. You will be devoted to that One alone and not to anything else. Your mind should not be divided and diverted from it. Give un-

¹²

जव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥८१२१

In the *Katha-Upanishad* it has also been said :

“पुरुषाच्च परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः ।”

divided devotion to that one Supreme Being where all beings exist and by whom all things of the universe is covered¹⁴ But very few can do it and, therefore, very few are really wise. Others are struggling in the path to put their whole mind in one direction. Those who are struggling, will not lose in their attempts, but will gain and gradually will be able to accomplish more and more. They need not despair. Those who have accomplished this, will be the happiest, and that is the state for which they lead a godly life and are self-controlled and free from passion. That should be the ideal of human life, and we should struggle and attain by that devotion and faith through which the goal can be reached.

¹⁴

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्तु नन्यया ।

यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥८।२२

In the *Upanishad*, it has been mentioned:

‘यस्मात् परं नापरमस्ति किञ्चिद् यस्मान्नानीयो न ज्यायोऽस्ति कश्चित् ।

वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येकस्तेनेदं पूर्णं पुरुषेण सर्वम् ॥

यच्च किञ्चिज्जगत् सर्वं दृश्यते श्रूयतेऽपि च ।

अन्तर्बहिश्च तत् सर्वं व्याप्या नारायणः स्थितः ॥

स पर्यगात् शुक्रम्.....

CHAPTER XXXII

HIGHEST GOAL IS REACHED BY THE YOGI

The Vedanta philosophy teaches that we are subject to birth and rebirth. All individuals are subject to these two, and some of them go to heavens. In Vedanta, we find that there are quite a number of heavens or different realms of existence where the individual souls can stay and reap results of their works. One of them is called the realm of ancestors, *Pitriloka*, where the departed ancestors, through their good works, have gone, and where they will live indefinitely. But that realm of the ancestors is like one from which the inhabitants will be obliged to come back to fulfil their other desires and to manifest their latent tendencies.

That realm of the ancestors is very difficult to locate. Some say that it is in the moon. We see one face of the moon all the time, and we do not know what it is on the other side, but some say that on the other side there is the realm of the ancestors. But that may be all imagination, because there is nothing by which we can prove it.¹ Some of the ancient philosophers of India also thought that the lunar regions were the places inhabited by the departed ancestors,² and others had a theory that all souls came from the moon which was one time inhabited, and when habitation was destroyed, all the souls came down to the earth. That is a mere theory. Some think that it may be true, but at any rate the realm of the ancestors

¹ At present investigations are made by the Russian and American scientists to find out the mystery of the moon and lunar regions, and some of the scientists have said that one face of the moon is full of dusts, mountains and craters, and it is not possible for any being to live in that lunar regions. The other face, they say, is dark and cold all the time, for want of the light of the sun.

² Vide the *Chhandogya* and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishads*, where different kinds of *lokas* have been described including the *pitriloka* or the region of the ancestors. The departed souls reach different *lokas* according to different qualities of work they perform.

is somewhere. We may not be able to locate it exactly at any particular point, but we consider it a realm of existence where the departed spirits go and live for an indefinite period and afterward come back.

There are other realms almost like the Christian and Mohammedan heavens. These realms are attained by those who have certain desires and, when their desires cannot be obtained on those planes of existence, they are carried by the force of their desires to those places where they find proper environments to fulfil their desires. But all those realms are like temporary abodes and are subject to rebirth, and all the inhabitants are bound to return to the earth after reaping the results of their works. There is one realm, called the highest i.e. the realm of Brahmā, the Creator and Projector of the phenomenal appearances i.e. names and forms and the starter of evolution. That realm of Brahmā is considered to be the highest. Those who have attained to the highest stages of spiritual knowledge, go there and continue to pursue that same course of knowledge, and when they come to the highest knowledge or spiritual realization, they attain to absolute freedom and never come back to this phenomenal world which is delusive, and is subject to birth and decay.

The Yogis know this and understand that these different realms of existence are transitory. These relative realms are not eternal. The wise ones know the method by which one can attain to each of these particular realms. They also know the time when a person should die at a certain time of the year, whether during the day or the night and under what conditions they should pass away in order to attain to those realms. The Yogis develop a power of giving up their bodies at their will. They can die whenever they wish, and it will be a natural death. The manner of death should correspond with the fulfilment of the duties of life, and the desires which were latent for the fulfilment of which this present incarnation has been necessitated. When that time comes, they give up their bodies, but do not die in unconsciousness. They consciously give up their bodies, and you will find in the twenty-third verse where it is said: "That time I will tell thee by which the Yogins departing from their bodies do not return, as also that by departing from their bodies they do return and

reincarnate themselves on this plane of existence.”³ That refers to two different paths, as you will find described in the Vedanta philosophy. The one is the path to the *Devas*, or bright ones, or gods, and the other is the path which leads to the realm of the ancestors. But we should remember that in one of the previous verses it is said that all these realms are subject to the law of birth and rebirth. The time which is considered the best for going into the realms of the *Devas* or higher heavens, is the time when there is light. This path is called the bright path (*shukla* or *dakshina-patha*) and everything that is related to this path, has something to do with the light, because light is symbolical of the light of knowledge. The higher knowledge is considered to be the light which enlightens the mind and disperse the darkness of ignorance, and everything which corresponds with the light of intelligence, is related to this bright path, or the path of the *Devas*.

“Fire-light, daytime, bright fortnight and six months of the northern solstice—going by this path the knowers of the Brahman reach the absolute Truth.”⁴ This time of the fire-light or day, which is the light of the sun and the six months of the northern solstice when the skies are bright, is considered to be the best for such Yogis who wish to depart from their bodies with a view to attaining to the highest realization of the Brahman, or the absolute Truth, and whenever they want to give up their bodies, they choose that time, that day, or bright

³ यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।

प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥८१२६

⁴ अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।

अत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥८१२४

“न हि सद्योमुक्तिभाजां सम्यग्दर्शननिष्ठानां गतिरागति वा क्वचिदस्ति ‘न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति’ इति श्रुतेः । ब्रह्मलीनप्राणा एव ते ब्रह्ममया ब्रह्मभूता एव ते । क्रमेण तु गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥”

Now what do we mean by *Agni* and *Jyoti*? These are two deities: one is pertaining to *kāla* (time) and the other is to *archira*, and both these two are related to time or period. *Ahah* (अहः) means the deity of the day and *shukla* is the deity of the bright fortnight (*shukla-paksha*), and *uttarayana* is the deity of northern solstice.

fortnight, or the time when the sun is near the northern solstice. They leave their bodies consciously, and take that prescribed course, and do not return again to this world⁵

Others who do not take that course, take the opposite path which is all dark ignorance. The Yogi who has not been successful in attaining to the highest wisdom, on the contrary, has desires of worldly nature, goes through the other path which leads to the realm of the ancestors. This path is of the dark, or the dark night, or dark fortnight, or six months of the southern solstice. By this path the Yogi attains to the lunar light and then returns. These Yogis do not have the path illumined by the light of knowledge which dispels the darkness of ignorance. As long as we are not conscious of our true Self which is eternal as distinct from that which is non-eternal and is perfect as distinct from that which is imperfect, so long we are in darkness of ignorance. As long as we are attached to the material forms and mistake matter for spirit and spirit for matter, so long we are in the darkness of nescience.

Any work performed in that state of ignorance, will lead to darkness and any work which is done with knowledge, would be a help in attaining to perfect liberation which is no other than emancipation of the soul from all bondage of ignorance or *samsāra*. From these two verses we gather that anything that proceeds from darkness, leads to darkness, and anything that proceeds from light, leads to the light of knowledge.⁶

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षष्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।

तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥८१२५॥

Dhuma is considered as the deity of smoke or cloud, and *Rātri* is the deity of the night.

⁶ In the *Brahmasutra*, 4.3. 1-4 and the *Bṛihadāranyaka-Upanishad*, 6.2.15, descriptions of two paths, the bright and the dark—*devayāna* and *pitriyāna* are given. (i) Those who go by the *devayāna*, gradually pass through the *lohas* of अविः, अहः, शुक्लपक्षः, उत्तरायण, संवत्सर, देवलोक, वायु, सूर्य, चन्द्र and विद्य त्, वरुण, इन्द्र and प्रजापति, and so they do not return again on earth, and (ii) those who go by *pitriyāna* (i.e. by the path of the ancestors), gradually pass through the regions of धूम, रात्रि, कृष्णपक्ष, दक्षिणायन etc, and after enjoying the *svarga*, they return again to the

This much is known to the Yogis that all works which we are doing, are more or less imperfect, as they proceed generally from selfishness, or are backed by limited selfish motives, and that which is selfish, is caused by the darkness of ignorance or imperfect knowledge. But when that imperfect knowledge becomes perfect and pure, the light of intelligence begins to shine and then we do not perform any work from selfish motives, but try to erase the lower self from our existence, and this erasure of the lower self is considered to be the highest ideal of a student who wishes to attain spiritual realization. The erasure of the lower or animal self which seeks the comforts of the material body and the luxuries of life, has been considered to be the highest ideal of all religions. Christ taught us how to erase, or to dominate over, this animal self, to get rid of this, to renounce it, to reject it, and to live in God. To commune with God *i.e.* to realize the essence of God would be the ideal, and that we can do by erasing or correcting the animal self. As far as we have accomplished that process of erasure of the animal self, so far we have advanced toward perfection. That would be the standard, and you can find it out for yourself and you need not go to anybody to find whether you are becoming godly or not. So you try to find out how much of the animal self you have erased and make that a standard of your spiritual life. Vedanta teaches us this standard and the method of transformation of the lower self (*Kānchā-āmi*) to the higher self (*Pākā-āmi*), as all other religions do, but all others do not emphasize as much as does Vedanta.

These two paths, the bright and the dark, of the soul are considered as eternal by one who obtains freedom from rebirth and also by the other who returns again in this world of desires and enjoyments.⁷ Why are they considered eternal? Because

earth. (Vide also the *Brahmasutra* 4.3.4, and the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad*, 6.2.16). But those who realize the *Atman* in this life, transcend everything of these paths and regions (*lokas*).

१

शुक्लकृष्णे गतीह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।

एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययावर्तते पुनः ॥८।२६

These two paths, the bright and the dark, are eternal (*sanātana*), because the world-process is eternal considering its ever-flowing currents. The path, *devayāna* helps to attain the Divine knowledge and so it is

their connection is eternal. I have explained several times that the process of evolution and involution is eternal. We are in a certain cycle of evolution. But it was preceded by other cycles of similar evolution, and these will be succeeded and followed by other cycles of a similar kind, and there is no end or beginning of it. We do not know where the first cycle of evolution began. We cannot trace it. It is impossible for the human mind to find that beginning or the first cycle of evolution. We can go far in our imagination in tracing the beginning of time, but even then we shall find it still beyond. The sense of 'beyond' still remains and, consequently, no absolute beginning has ever been found. Similarly, if we try to trace the absolute end to this chain of evolution and involution, we cannot find it, and there will be the sense of "beyond" even to the uttermost extremity. Even from there we get the idea that we can go on. Therefore, these two paths, *devayāna* and *pitriyāna*—the bright and the dark—have been in existence in each cycle or evolutionary period, and whenever or wherever there was any kind of manifestation of animate objects or living beings, there were these paths, and, therefore, these are eternal, and these are subject to the laws of nature.

As long as we are in the darkness of ignorance, we are subject to the cycle of birth and rebirth. We may go to heaven and live for a certain period, but that will not last forever. We are in a cycle of changes, and, in that cycle, we are subject to the cycle of birth and rebirth. Therefore we may expect to go to heaven by doing good works, but we should know that after the expiration of that period we shall have to leave that realm and go to other realms. That idea of transitoriness even of the heavens is held very strongly in Vedānta. There is the idea of lower regions of darkness of ignorance, and these regions are like places of suffering and pain. They are temporary and being relative, cannot be eternal. So the idea of an eternal heaven, or hell, does not exist in Vedānta. These heavens are all temporary, lasting for a certain period, and we are bound to get out of them sooner or later. Everything depends upon our suffering or enjoyment, and, as these causes are not eternal, so their

white (i.e. bright), and the path, *pitriyāna*, does not help to remove the darkness of ignorance or nescience, so it is dark.

effects can never be eternal. But these two paths are eternal like the ever-flowing currents of water, because they are like natural laws. They have existed from the beginningless past, and will exist in the eternal or endless future, just as the law of evolution and gravitation will continue. The law of causation will also continue to exist forever. It is eternal, because every cause must produce an effect of similar nature. Similarly the darkness of ignorance must lead to birth and rebirth. It is a law and that law is also eternal. The light of knowledge dispels the darkness of ignorance. The one is called light and the other darkness. The bright one illumines the soul, and the other covers it with a veil of darkness as a cloud, and, therefore, it is called dark.

So Sri Krishna says: "O Pārtha, knowing the secrets of these two paths, the bright and the dark, no Yogi is ever deluded. Because he knows that the bright one will help him to realize the Truth and the dark one will entangle him in the net of *samsāra*. Therefore Arjuna, you adopt the path of *dhyānayoga* and absorb yourself in the Brahman-consciousness."⁸ Really a Yogi who knows that selfishness leads to suffering of bondage, will never act with selfish motive, because he knows it to be as true as any other law.

Knowing these two paths a Yogi does not wish to go to heaven for the enjoyment of pleasure, but he renounces that and gives up all desire for enjoyment. Because he knows that it is not eternal and it will last for a certain period, and afterward he will have to return from that realm. All earthly and heavenly enjoyments are transitory, and you can find it out in this life. We try to continue the enjoyment of a thing which we liked at one time, but when the conditions vary, we may not do the same thing, and may not even care for it. That shows that the nature of enjoyment was transitory. It is only

* नैते सती पार्थ जानन् योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥८।२७

Anandagiri said:

“मोक्षाय क्रममुत्तर्यमित्यर्थः योगी ध्याननिष्ठो गतिमपि ध्यायन्नैव मुह्यति केवलं कर्म दक्षिणमार्गप्रापकं कर्तव्यत्वेन प्रत्येतीत्यर्थः योगस्यापुनरावृत्तिफलत्वेन नित्यकर्तव्यत्वं सिद्धिमित्युपसंहरति—तस्मादिति ।”

the condition that makes us feel happy for the time being. If we are not longing for any particular enjoyment, we may see it, but not care for it. When we are thirsty, water is delicious, but when we are not thirsty, we do not want water. So if we do not care for the celestial enjoyments, they do not appeal to us, but when we do care, they are the greatest thing we can think of. So the standard is in our mental attitude. External conditions cannot bring happiness unto us, if we have no longing for them. That which we long for, brings happiness to fulfil our desires. A Yogi who has no longing for the enjoyments and pleasures of heaven, will go beyond them. Ordinary mortals get deluded, because they do not know that happiness and pleasure depend upon our own mental attitude, therefore, at all times we should be guided by the practice of Yoga. And, for this reason, Sri Krishna has advised Arjuna to dive deep into the ocean of the Brahman-knowledge.

The practice of Yoga will help us in gaining the perfect control over our mental attitude. If we have any particular longing, we should use discrimination (*sadasat-vichāra*), and through proper discrimination we should become free from bondage. Yoga is that practice and method by which we gain control over our mind. Proper discrimination shows that darkness leads to ignorance, and works done through ignorance, will bring bad results, and that is the law of action and reaction, or the law of cause and sequence. When we have gained that right knowledge and exercise it in our every-day life, we are masters of ourselves, and that is the aim of life. It is known that through breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*) and concentration (*dhāraṇā*), we get an external result, and we gradually become masters of ourselves, and that is the object of the practice of Yoga. Therefore if we have attained to that self-mastery, no one can make us unhappy. If the whole world goes to pieces, it does not matter, we are masters of ourselves, and not mere creatures subject to bondages and environments. Not one who simply sits in a corner and meditates, is considered to be a Yogi, but a Yogi is one who is master of himself. And this practice will help also in bringing the right conditions of our organs, which will help us also in attaining that self-mastery. They are means to this great end, and that is the ideal of all religions.

Why do we try to be religious? Because we want that self-mastery which is our own property; we wish to know our true self that shines all the time in us. We are longing for that which we have lost or forgotten and search here and there for it. Who can tell us how we can gain that self-mastery and also self-realization? And we love religion, because that promises to bring us back that treasure which we have lost. In fact, we unconsciously long for that true religion, and nothing can satisfy us before we attain to it. Therefore, this practice is necessary, and the method will help us. From the beginning to the end this self-mastery is the watchword in our life. Shri Krishna says to Arjuna: "Therefore, at all times practise Yoga, have that discrimination and self-mastery, and through that you will gain the highest goal and will overcome the chain of birth and rebirth ; will get out of it and will not be subject to these evolutionary cycle."⁹ Those who are subject to evolutionary cycles, will continue to come back to have their desires fulfilled to a certain extent and the very fulfilment will create other desires of similar nature, because that is the tendency. If you have enjoyed a sense pleasure once, you will have the tendency to enjoy it another time, and it will be twice stronger next time. Therefore, we should try to know that fulfilment of desires will never make us happy, but self-mastery and not to desire anything will do. It will be hard at first, but we are our own master. We are not slaves of desires and sense conditions, and they are subservient to our own mighty nature.

The Yoga practice will always remind us that we are the children of immortal bliss, that we are the spirits, that we are not subject to these material conditions etc., and we are not slaves of passion and desires. Works that proceed through ignorance, will end by producing the results, and these results will last for some time. Love and passion will force us to work in the same way again. Therefore, we should know that by doing work of that kind we cannot get the absolute freedom and self-mastery. But if we work for work's sake with no attachment to the results, then we are free from those results. Work through love never seeks a result. Work done through duty's sake seek even a result, but work through love never generate

⁹ Cf. *Gita*, 8.27.

any result, and that we should learn. We should learn to work through love and duty's sake and also and not for money, which is the standard of the Western country. See how few people are in the West, who really work for love, and how many there are who work for results. It is so in every country, but mostly so in the Western country, because, in the West, the standard is for material prosperity. You have given in the West, your whole life and soul for that result, but you can better govern your whole life and soul for that result which proceeds from love.

A Yogi knows that these works, no matter how good they are, will lead us to that state of ignorance, will not help us in getting out of the den of darkness, and will only keep us in the path which brings us back to this worldly existence. So a Yogi renounces that path, and seeks the light of knowledge by which he attains to the highest ideal of life, which is freedom, and self-realization.

In the last verse, Sri Krishna says: "The fruits of merit (*punya-phala*) are declared in the reading of the Vedas in austerities, in performance of sacrifices and in charity (*dāna*) and the Yogis realize the fruits or results of their performance, and attain to the Supreme Brahman by surpassing those fruits of merit".¹⁰

In the scriptures, it has been said that if we perform these works like reading or reciting the Vedas, penance (*tapah*) sacrifice (*yajna*) and charity, (*dāna*), then we will get the results, will go to heaven, and have this enjoyment. The scrip-

¹⁰

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव
दानेषु यत् पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।
अत्येति तत् सर्वमिदं विदित्वा
योगी परं स्थानमुपैति वाच्यम् ॥८॥२८

Anandagiri said in the glossary:

“प्रकृतो ध्याननिष्ठो योगीत्युच्यते । ऐश्वर्यं विष्णोः परमं पदं तदेव तिष्ठत्यस्मिन्न-
शेषमिति स्थानं योगानुष्ठानादशेषफलातिशायि मोक्षलक्षणं फलं क्रमेण लब्धं
शक्यमिति भावः ।”

tures of the Vedas describe the good works in the name of the Lord, or to certain aspects of the Deity. These works will lead to certain realms, and bring certain happiness which we long for, for a certain length of time. If we sacrifice anything we get certain results which are prescribed. If we sacrifice wealth, we will get so much in return. If we sacrifice the best thing we have, we will get such a result. There are also fruits of merit, declared in regard to austerities. If we live an austere life, we will gain much strength and good results. If we perform charitable works and give to the poor people, that will bring much happiness and enjoyment. All these are described in the scriptures, but a Yogi who knows the truth and suppresses all these fruits of merit, attains to the supreme primordial abode of the absolute Truth. A Yogi knows this truth, and this truth includes everything that is said in this eighth chapter.

This eighth chapter begins with these questions: "What is the nature of the individual self, what is the proper action, what is declared to be the mental, and what is divine, who and where is the director of our works in the body, and how at the time of death art thou to be known by the self-controlled."¹¹ All these questions have been answered in this chapter, and if a Yogi knows these answers and lives up to them, holding the ideal before his mental eye, he reaches the supreme goal. This individual self and the Supreme Brahman are described in the scriptures. The Brahman is the Supreme Essence, and the individual self is said to be a part of His essence, nay, is one with His essence.

The highest supreme truth is the Brahman. That is imperishable, and our individual self is one with the essence of that absolute Truth. It is not different from it. So if we know our true nature of the individual self, we have known the Brahman, and also we have known the absolute Truth. We cannot know God the Absolute without knowing ourselves. How can we know God the Absolute without being conscious of our own self? We can only know Him by starting from the knowledge concerning our own self.

When we try to know an external object, we cannot know

¹¹ Cf. *Gita*, 8.1-2.

that thing by itself. We know only our relation to that thing, i.e. we know the image or reflection that is produced by that thing. We can never know a thing that is outside of us, but we can know our relation to that. When we try to know God, we can know only our relation to God, and not more than that. When we try to know the absolute Truth, we can know only our relation to the absolute Truth, or the reflection of the absolute Truth in ourselves. We are the standard at every step of our knowledge, and the best thing would be to find out first what that standard is, and what is its nature; and that knowledge of our true self, we can get more easily through the teachings of Vedanta than through anything else. Vedanta brings us directly to the source of all knowledge.

Other religions will ask us to believe in some personal God, or to worship Him, and to believe in some doctrines and dogmas, which are only secondary and non-essential things. Vedanta helps us in going straight to the truth, not in any round-about way, and it is for this reason some people may not like it. Some do not like or appreciate anything that comes straight. Human minds are queer things, and so few like truth. The preacher of truth has never succeeded in this world, but when he clothes this truth with all kinds of nonsense, it is greatest success. Because the people long for nonsense. Such is the world, not in the West alone, but everywhere and in every age. The human nature has not changed though we have passed through so many stages of evolution. Vedanta says: "If you are a seeker of truth, find out what truth is, and what your true self is."

In the last verse of the chapter it is said that the fruits of merit are declared in the scriptures, and those are due to sacrifices, austerities, and charitable works. The Yogi who knows the truths that have been described in this chapter, surpasses all these fruits or results of actions and good works, and attains to the supreme primeval abode from which he never returns. He feels divine. He is one with the absolute Truth. His individuality is not lost, but he gains infinite individuality, and becomes so great and perfect that there is no limitation to it. Our individuality is limited, but when these limitations have been removed, we are greater than the greatest. Then we do not wish to remain slaves to our individuality, bondages, en-

vironmental conditions, and mental attitudes, but we want to manifest full individuality which is infinite and perfect. And when that is done, everything is fulfilled and the highest goal is reached.

APPENDIX

Texts of the Chapters I & II of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and
English Translation of the Texts by Swami Abhedananda.

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

प्रथमोऽध्यायः

(अर्जुनविषादयोगः)

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुतसवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सज्जय ॥१॥

सज्जय उवाच

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥२॥
पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्र्येण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥३॥
अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥४॥
वृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित् कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥५॥
युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौमद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वएव महारथाः ॥६॥
अस्माकन्तु विशिष्टा ये ताश्चिवोध द्विजोत्तम ।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते ॥७॥
भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिजयः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिर्जयद्रथः ॥८॥
अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थं त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥९॥

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
 पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ॥१०
 अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
 भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥११
 तस्य संजनयन् हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।
 सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥१२
 ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
 सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥१३
 ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
 माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥१४
 पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।
 पौण्ड्रं दध्म्यौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥१५
 अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
 नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥१६
 काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
 धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥१७
 द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
 सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान् दध्मुः पृथक् पृथक् ॥१८
 स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।
 नभश्च पृथिवीञ्चैव तुमुलोऽभ्यनुनादयन् ॥१९
 अथ व्यवस्थितान् दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिञ्चजः ।
 प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसम्पाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥२०
 हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

अर्जुन उवाच

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥२१
 यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्ध कामानवस्थितान् ।
 कै मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥२२
 योतस्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
 धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्दुर्दैर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥२३

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडकेशेन भारत ।
 सेनयोरुभयोमध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥२५॥
 भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषाञ्च महीक्षिताम् ।
 उवाच पाथे ! पश्यैतान् समवेतान् कुरुनिति ॥२६॥
 तत्रापश्यत् स्थितान् पार्थः पितृनथ पितामहान् ।
 आचार्य्यान्मातुलान् भ्रातृन् पुत्रान् पौत्रान् सखीं स्तथा ॥
 श्वशुरान् सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ॥२७॥
 तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान् बन्धुनवस्थितान् ।
 कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ॥२८॥

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमान् स्वजनान् कृष्ण ! युयुत्सून् समवस्थितान् ।
 सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखञ्च परिशुष्यति ॥२९॥
 वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ।
 गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात् त्वक् चैव परिदह्यते ॥३०॥
 न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ।
 निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ॥३१॥
 न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ।
 न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ॥३२॥
 किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द ! किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ।
 येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ॥
 त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ।
 आचार्य्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ॥३४॥
 मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ।
 एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ॥३५॥
 अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किनु महीकृते ।
 निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः काः प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ॥३६॥
 पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतान् आततायिनः ।
 तस्माच्चाहं वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् खवान्धवान् ।
 स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥३७॥

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
 कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥३८
 कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
 कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्विज्जनार्दन ॥३९
 कुलक्षये प्रणदयन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
 धर्मो नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥४०
 अधर्माभिभवात् कृष्ण ! प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
 स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय ! जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥४१
 सङ्करो नरकार्यैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।
 पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥४२
 दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
 उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥४३
 उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।
 नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥४४
 अहो वत महत् पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
 यद् राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥४५
 यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।
 धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥४६
 अर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम प्रथमोऽध्यायः ।

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

(सांख्ययोगः)

सञ्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः सङ्क्षेपे रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥४७

सञ्जय उवाच

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रूपूर्णकुलेक्षणम् ।
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥१

श्रीभगवान् उवाच

कुतस्ता कस्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनायेजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥२
क्लैर्व्यं मास्म गमः पार्थ ! नैतत् त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्तोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥३

अर्जुन उवाच

कथं भीष्ममहं सङ्क्षेपे द्रोणञ्च मधुसूदन ।
इषुभिः प्रतियोतस्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥४
गुरूनहता हि महानुभावान्,
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीहलोके ।
हत्वार्थकामास्तु गुरूनिहैव,
भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥५
न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो,
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषामस्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥६

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः,
 पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।
 यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे,
 शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥७
 न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्यात्,
 यच्छ्लोकमुच्छ्रोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
 अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं,
 राज्यं सुरानामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥८

सज्जय उवाच

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।
 न योतस्य इति गोविन्द मुक्त्वा तुष्णीं बभूव ह ॥९
 तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
 सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥१०

श्रीभगवान् उवाच

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्तं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
 गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥११
 न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
 न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥१२
 देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
 तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिं धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥१३
 मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय ! शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
 आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥१४
 यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
 समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥१५
 नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
 उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्तदग्नौ ॥१६
 अविनाशि तु तद् विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
 विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्त्तुमर्हति ॥१७

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
 अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद् युध्यस्व भारत ॥१८
 य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
 उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥१९
 न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन् नायं भुत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
 अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो, न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥२०
 वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।
 कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ ! कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥२१
 वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय, नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
 तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥२२
 नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
 न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥२३
 अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।
 नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥२४
 अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
 तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥२५
 अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
 तथापि त्वं महाबाहो ! नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२६
 जातस्य हि भ्रूवो मृत्युर्भ्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
 तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥२७
 अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
 अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तव का परिदेवना ॥२८
 आचार्य्यवत् पश्यति कश्चिदेनमाश्चर्य्यवेद् वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
 आश्चर्य्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥२९
 देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ! ।
 तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूताणि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥३०
 स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
 धर्म्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥३१
 यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
 सुखिनः क्षत्रिया पार्थ ! लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥३२

अथ चेत् तमिमं धर्मं संभ्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
 ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्त्तिञ्च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥३३
 अकीर्त्तिञ्चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।
 सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्त्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥३४
 भयाद् रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।
 येषाञ्च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥३५
 अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।
 निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥३६
 हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
 तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय ! युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥३७
 सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
 ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥३८
 एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धियोगे त्विमां शृणु ।
 बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ ! कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥३९
 नेहाभिन्नमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
 स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भवात् ॥४०
 व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।
 बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥४१
 याभिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
 वेदवादरताः पार्थ ! नान्यदस्तीतिवादिनः ॥४२
 कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
 क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥४३
 भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
 व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥४४
 त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन !
 निर्द्वन्द्वो सित्यसत्तस्थो नियोगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥४५
 यावानर्थं उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।
 तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥४६
 कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
 मा कर्मफलहेतु भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्तृक्कर्मणि ॥४७

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
 सिद्धयसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥४८
 दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद् धनञ्जय ।
 बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥४९
 बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
 तस्माद् योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥५०
 कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मणीषिणः ।
 जन्मबन्धविनिमुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥५१
 यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
 तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥५२
 श्रुतिविप्रतिपक्षा ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
 समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥५३

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।।
 स्थितधी किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥५४

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ ! मनोगतान् ।
 आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥५५
 दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
 वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थीतधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥५६
 यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत् प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
 नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५७
 यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
 इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियाथेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥५८
 विषया विनिवर्त्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
 रसवज्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्त्तते ॥५९
 यततोऽपि कौन्तेय ! पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
 इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥६०

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत् मत्परः ।
 वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥६१॥
 ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
 सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥६२॥
 क्रोधाद् भवति संमोहः संमोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
 स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥६३॥
 रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
 आत्मवश्यै विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥६४॥
 प्रसादे सत्त्वंदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
 प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥६५॥
 नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
 न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥६६॥
 इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
 तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुनावमिवाम्भसि ॥६७॥
 आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं, समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
 तद्वत् कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वं, स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥७०॥
 विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निस्पृहः ।
 निम्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥७१॥
 एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ ! नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
 स्थित्वाऽस्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिष्ठाऽमृच्छति ॥७२॥
 सांख्ययोगनाम् द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ।

BHAGAVAD GITA

THE DIVINE MESSAGE

CHAPTER I

DISCOURSE I

Sanjaya narrates the course of the battle of Kurukshetra:

1. Dhritarastra said: Assembled together on the sacred field of Kurukshetra, and eager to fight, what did my sons and those of Pandu do, O Sanjaya?

2. Sanjaya said: Beholding the army of the Pandavas in battle array, King Duryodhana approached his Preceptor (Drona) and spoke these words:

3. O Master, Behold this mighty army of the sons of Pandu, marshalled by the son of Drupada, thy talented pupil.

4. Here are heroes, mighty archers, the equals of Bhima and Arjuna in battle,—Yuyudhana and Virata and Drupada the great warrior (Maharatha).¹

5. Dhristaketu and Chekitaana, and the valiant King of Kasi; Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Sivi's son Saivya that eminent man.

6. The valiant Yudhamanyu and the brave Uttamaujas; the son of Subhadra, Saubhadra and the sons of Draupadi—all masters of great cars (Maharathas).

7. O best of the Brahmins! learn also who are most distinguished among us, and are leaders of our army. For thy information I mention them.

8. Thyself and Bhishma and Karna and Kripa the victor in war, Asvatthama and Vikarna and Jayadratha, the son of Somadatta.

9. And many other heroes (armed with divers weapons all well-skilled in battles) who have resolved to sacrifice their lives for my sake.

10. Unlimited is the force of ours protected by Bhishma,

¹ 'Maharatha' means a warrior proficient in military science, who singlehanded can fight a thousand bowmen.

whereas that force of theirs protected by Bhima is limited. (Some translators interpret this verse to mean that Duryodhana considers his army insufficient and that of the enemy sufficient)

11. Do you all, posted to your respective positions in all the divisions of the army, protect Bhishma alone.

Both armies ready for battle

12. His grandsire of great prowess, (Bhishma) the oldest of the Kurus, in order to cheer him, shouted forth the roar of a lion and blew his conch

13. Then suddenly all conches and kettle drums, and tabors, trumpets and cowhorns were sounded at once, and that uproar became tumultuous.

14. Then Madhava (Krishna) and Pandava (Arjuna) seated in a grand chariot yoked to (four) white steeds, blew splendidly their uncommon conches.

15. The Lord of the senses (Krishna) blew the *Panchajanya*, the Victor of Wealth (Arjuna) blew the *Devadatta* (god given conch); and Vrikodara² (Bhima) the performer of terrific deeds blew his great conch *Paundra*.

16. King Yudhishthira, the Son of Kunti blew the Anantavijaya (conch named "Ever-Victorious") and Nakul and Sahadeva blew respectively the Sughosha (Loud sounding) and Manipuspaka (Gem-flowered).

17. The king of Kasi, the expert bowman and Sikhandi, the master of a great car (Maharatha), Dhristadyumna, and Virata and Satyaki, the unconquered.

18. Drupada and the Sons of Draupadi, the Son of Subhadra, of mighty arms, all blew conches severally, O Lord of the earth!

19. That tumultuous din, making both heaven and earth resound, rent the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons.

Arjuna's survey of the enemy

20. Then beholding the army of Dhritarashtra regularly marshalled, when the discharge of missiles had begun, the Son of Pandu, whose standard was the monkey, raising his bow

² Having a small belly like that of a tiger.

addressed these words, O Lord of Earth, to Hrishikesha (Krishna).

21-22. Arjuna said: O Imperishable One! Place my chariot between the two armies, while I observe those who stand here eager to engage in battle, and ascertain with whom I have to fight on this eve of battle.

23. I will observe those who are assembled here and are about to engage in battle, desirous to serve in war, the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra (Duryodhana).

24. Sanjaya said: O Bharata, Hrishikesha (Krishna) thus addressed by Gudakesa^a (Arjuna) drawing up that excellent chariot between the two armies.

25. In front of Bhishma and Drona and all the rulers of the earth said: "O son of Pritha (Arjuna), behold these assembled Kurus:

26. There the son of Pritha saw arrayed in both the armies fathers and grandfathers and preceptors, maternal uncles, brothers, and sons, grandsons and comrades, fathers-in-law as well as dear friends.

27. Beholding all those assembled kinsmen, the son of Kunti (Arjuna) was overcome with deepest compassion and spoke thus in sorrow:

28. Arjuna said: Seeing these kinsmen, O Krishna, arrayed and eager to engage in battle, my limbs droop down and my mouth is quite dried up.

27. A tremor comes over my body, and my hairs stand on end; the great bow (Gandiva) slips from my hand; and my skin burns intensely.

30. I am also unable to hold myself up, and my mind is as if whirling around and, O Keshava (Krishna), I see adverse omens.

31. Neither do I foresee any good from killing my own kinsmen in the battle. O Krishna, I desire neither victory, nor kingdom nor pleasures.

32-34. Of what avail is kingdom to us, O Govinda, (Krishna)! What need have we of enjoyments or even life! Those for whose sake, our kingdom, enjoyment and pleasures are sought (by us) are standing here for battle, having staked

^a Conqueror of sleep i.e. not indolent.

their life and wealth-preceptors, fathers, sons and grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law as also (other) relatives.

35. These I do not wish to kill though I am killed, O Slayer of Madhu (Krishna) even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds⁴ how much less for this earth (alone)?

36. By killing these sons of Dhritarashtra, what joy could come to us? O Janardana (Krishna), sin only we shall incur by killing these fellows (Atatayi).

37. Therefore we ought not to kill the sons of Dhritarashtra our own kinsmen. For how shall we be happy, O Madhava, (Krishna), after killing our own relatives ?

38. Though these, with understanding overpowered by greed, do not see the evil resulting from the extinction of families and the sin in hostility to friends.

39. Still should we not, O Janardana, learn to refrain from this sin, when we see clearly the evil (that will come) from the destruction of families?

40. On the destruction of a family the immemorial rites of the families disappear. When rites (*dharma*) disappear, impiety (*adharma*) predominates over the whole family (i.e. the surviving members).

41. From the prevalence of impiety, O Krishna, the women of the family become corrupt ; and women being corrupted, O descendant of Vrishni (Krishna), there arises a mixture of castes (colour).

42. That admixture is for the hell, of the family as well as of the destroyers of families ; since their ancestors fall, being deprived of the offerings of food-balls and drink (water).

43. By these crimes of the destroyers of families, which create confusion of castes (colours the everlasting customs of the community (jati) immemorial rites of castes and duties of families are subverted.

44. We have heard, O Janardana (Krishna), that men whose family rites are subverted, must necessarily swell in hell.

45. Alas! we are resolved to commit a great sin, since we are prepared to kill our kinsmen, through greed of kingdom and happiness.

⁴ The earth, planetary worlds, and the heaven.

46. If the sons of Dhritarashtra, weapons in hand, were to kill me, unresisting and unarmed in the battle-that would be better for me.

47. Sanjaya said having said thus, Arjuna on the battle field with his mind agitated by grief, sat down in his chariot, casting aside his bow with arrows.

Thus ends the first discourse called 'The Despondency of Arjuna'.

CHAPTER II

DISCOURSE II

1. Sanjaya said: To him, who was thus overcome with compassion, and whose eyes were full of tears and turbid, and despondent, Madhusudana (Krishna) spoke these words:

2. The Blessed Lord said: In such a (place of) peril, whence has come upon thee, O Arjuna, this dejection, unbecoming an honourable man (Arya), debarring from heaven and causing disgrace.

3. Yield not to unmanliness, O Partha (Arjuna)! It both not befit thee. Cast off this base weakness of heart and arise, O tormentor of foes.

Arjuna seeks instruction from the Lord

4. Arjuna said: How shall I, O slayer of Madhu (Krishna), encounter in battle with arrows, Bhishma and Drona, who are worthy of worship, O destroyer of enemies?

5. It is better, indeed, to live in this world, even on alms, than to slay the preceptors of great honour; but if I slay these teachers, even in this world I should only enjoy pleasure of wealth and desires stained with blood.

6. And indeed we know not which of the two is better for us—whether that we should conquer them or that they should conquer us; those sons of Dhritarashtra, whom having killed we should not desire to live, even they stand arrayed against us.

7. With my nature (heart) overpowered by the taint of weakness, with a mind confounded about (my) duty (*dharma*), I ask Thee: Tell me with certainty what is good for me I am Thy disciple. Instruct me, O I supplicate Thee.

8. I do not see what can remove this grief which burns up my senses, even though I obtain unrivalled and prosperous dominion on earth or even sovereignty over the gods.

9. Sanjaya said: Arjuna, the conqueror of sleep and tormentor of foes, having thus spoken to the Lord of the Senses.

(Krishna), declared to Govinda (Krishna) "I shall not fight". and verily remained silent.

10 O descendant of Bharata, Krishna the Lord of Senses, as if smiling addressed him who was grieving in the midst of the two armies in these words:

11: The Blessed Lord said: Thou hast grieved for those that are not to be lamented, yet thou speakest words of wisdom. But wise men grieve neither for the dead nor for the living.

12. It is not that I did not exist before, nor thou, nor these rulers of men, nor that we all shall cease to be hereafter.

13. As the embodied Self has childhood, youth and old age in this body so he acquires another body. There the wise man is not deluded.

14. The sensations of cold and heat, of pleasure and pain, O son of Kunti (Arjuna), are caused by the contact of senses with their objects; they are impermanent, for they are ever coming and going. Endure them, O descendant of Bharata.

15. For, O chief of men, he whom these disturb not, to whom pleasure and pain are the same, and who is self-controlled, is well fitted for immortality.

16.¹ That which is unreal (transitory) hath no existence, while Reality never ceases to exist. Of these two, the Seers of Truth realize the final ends (difference).

17 But know that as imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None is ever able to cause destruction of this Immutable One.

18. These are said to be the perishable bodies of the embodied (Self) who is eternal, indestructible and immeasurable. Do fight, therefore, O descendant of Bharata.

19. Whoever thinks this (Self) as the slayer or whoever thinks it as slain, both of these know not the Truth. This (Self) neither slays nor is (ever) slain.

20. It (Self) is never born, nor does it ever die; nor after having existed, will it again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, unchangeable, ancient. It is not slain when the body is slain.

2-. How can he, who knows this (Self) as unborn, eternal

¹ Another version - From non-existence existence does not come, and that which exists cannot be non-existent. Of these two, the Seers of Truth realize the final ends (difference).

and indescribable, slay anyone or cause another to slay, O son of Pritha?

22. As a man having cast off worn-out garments puts on new ones, so the embodied soul, having cast off worn-out bodies assumes others which are new.

23. Weapons do not cleave It, fire does not burn It; water does not moisten It; wind does not dry It.

24. This (Self) is not cleavable; it is not combustible; it is not to be moistened; it is not to be dried up. It is everlasting, all penetrating, firm, immovable and eternal.

25. It is said to be unperceivable, unthinkable, and unchangeable. Therefore, knowing It to be such, thou oughtest not to grieve.

26. But if thou thinkest this (Self) as being born constantly and dying constantly, even then, O mighty-armed, thou oughtest not to grieve thus.

(Here Sri Krishna points out that mourning for the dead is useless, even from the viewpoint of a materialist who believes that the Self is born with the birth of the body, and is destroyed with the death of the body.)

27. (For) death is verily certain to that which is born, and birth is certain to the dead. Wherefore, thou oughtest not to grieve over what is inevitable.

28. O descendant of Bhārata! Unmanifested is the origin of all beings, manifested is their middle state, (*i.e.*, between birth and death), and likewise unmanifested again is their dissolution. What is there for lamentation?

The true self is very difficult to realize

29. One looks upon this (Self) as a wonder; another likewise speaks of this as a wonder; and another hears of this as a wonder; even after having heard of this (Self) no one does (truly) know it.

30. In the bodies of all, O descendant of Bharata, this embodied (Self) is ever indestructible. Wherefore, thou oughtest not to grieve for all beings.

(Thus by these verses the Lord Krishna showed to his disciple Arjuna that from the standpoint of the immortal Self there is neither death nor any occasion for lamentation; in the

following verses He shows that the duty of a born warrior Kshatriya is to fight for a righteous cause and to sacrifice his life on the battlefield.)

31. Looking to thine own duty (*dharma*) also thou oughtest not to falter, for, indeed, there is nothing higher for a Kshatriya (born warrior) than a righteous battle

33. But if thou wouldst not engage in this righteous battle, then having forsaken thine own duty (*dharma* and honour, thou shalt incur sin.

(This is a retort to the objection raised by Arjuna in verse 36, chapter I).

34. Furthermore, people will talk about thine endless dishonour, and, to one who is highly esteemed dishonour is worse than death.

35. The heroes of great chariots will think that thou hast withdrawn from battle through fear; and thou shalt be made little of by those who thought highly of thee (before).

36. Thine enemies, too, scorning thy prowess, will utter many abusive words. What could be more painful than that?

37. Slain thou wilt gain heaven, having conquered thou wilt enjoy (the kingdom of) the earth. Therefore arise, O son of Kunti, resolved to battle.

38. Regarding pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat as the same, engage thou, then, in battle; thus thou shalt not incur sin.

(This is an answer to Arjuna's argument given in verse 36, Chapter I. The idea conveyed here is this: If thou canst engage in battle remaining unattached to the pairs of opposites,—in other words, seeking neither pleasure, gain, nor victory, and fearing neither pain, loss nor defeat but regarding thy action as the highest duty irrespective of its results,—then thou shalt not commit any sin at all. For all sinful acts proceed from selfish motives.

39. This knowledge that I have declared to thee is relating to the Sankhya;² now hear that relating to Yoga³, imbibed

² Sankhya means here the realization of the absolute Self, i.e. Divine knowledge.

³ Yoga here refers to Karma Yoga (path of action) which teaches that the freedom of the soul can be acquired through unselfish works done for the service of the Lord or humanity, without seeking the results thereof.

with which (this knowledge) O Partha, thou shalt cast off the bonds of *karma*.

40. In this (path of unselfish action) there is neither loss of effort (already made for results of action) nor any (chance of) harm. Even the least of this knowledge saves one from great fear (of death and rebirth).

(Here Krishna explains that 'Karma Yoga' is a safe method for the reason that a devotee, who works simply to serve God and humanity, without seeking any result for himself, does not lose anything, nor obtain harmful results, like a worldly worker. Because purification of the heart, which is the principal and immediate result of all unselfish works, comes to him automatically even when unasked for, and upon which depends the final emancipation of the soul from all bondage of birth, death and rebirth.)

41. In this (path) there is one thought of a resolute nature, O son of Kuru, but manysided and endless are the thoughts of the irresolute.

(One who enters on this path of unselfish action—Karma Yoga—has the one determined idea of dedicating all actions with their results to the Supreme Lord, consequently his mind is one-pointed and with a single purpose. While those who work to gratify their selfish purposes, find no end of their desires, and their mind in seeking results is scattered in various ways.)

42. O son of Pritha, the unwise, rejoicing in the eulogistic statements of the Vedas (Scriptures) and asserting that there is nothing else

43. Whose hearts are full of desires, and whose highest goal is *Svarga*⁵ (heaven), utter this (well-known) flowery speech which promises birth as the reward of actions and which abounds in specific acts for the attainment of pleasure and power.

44. Those whose minds are captivated by that (flowery speech) and who are strongly attached to (worldly) pleasure and power have no resolute thought (which is one) fixed in their mind.

⁴ *Karma* lit. means action; hence (the law of) action and reaction and (the law of) cause and effect, which create worldly bondage to the soul.

⁵ *Svarga* is the abode of celestial pleasures where the souls, after death, go to reap the results of their good acts, and from which they return afterwards to this mortal plane with earthly bodies.

45. The Vedas⁶ relate to the world of the three qualities. Be free⁷ from three qualities, O Arjuna, free from the pairs of opposites heat and cold, pleasur and pain), perpetually established in *sattva* (goodness), free from the anxiety of (new) acquisition and preservation, and Self possessed.

46. To the Brahmana who has realized the Truth all the Vedas (Scriptures) are of so much use as a small tank of water is, when there is a flood everywhere.

(The infinite bliss which is attained by an enlightened knower of Truth—the Absolute—includes all the pleasures and happiness which are described in the Vedas—*karmakanda*).

47 To work alone is thy right but never to the fruits thereof. Let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be for inaction.

(The law of *karma* binds those who work thirsting for results; and the desire for such results is the cause of rebirth of the soul. But those who work not for results, but through love or through a sense of duty or as acts of worship, transcend this law and attain to freedom).

48 Being firm in devoting (Yoga) O, Conqueror of wealth, do thy works, abandoning attachment, and regarding success and failure alike. This evenness of mind (in regard to success and failure) is called *Yoga* (devotion).

(Perform works for the sake of the Lord, casting off even such a thought as, 'May He be pleased', which is a kind of attachment to the result).

49. Verily, work (with desire for results) is far inferior to union with wisdom Seek refuge in wisdom Miserable are those who become causes of fruit of action

(Miserable is he, O Gargi, who departs from this world without knowing the Imperishable One."—*Upanishad*.)

The Merit of Union with Wisdom

50. He who is united with Wisdom abandons here (in this life) both good and bad deeds. Therefore, devote thyself to this Yoga. Yoga is the real dexterity in work (*Karma*).

⁶ The ritualistic portion of the Vedas (*karmakanda*). Three qualities—*sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion), and *tamas* (darkness, inertia). These three are the aspects of Nature or *Prakriti*. These will be described in Chapter XIV.

⁷ Be free from all desires.

(Dexterity lies in turning the course of actions toward freedom, by casting off motive for results and remaining even minded in success or failure).

Results of Karma-Yoga

51. The wise men, possessed of this evenness of mind, abandoning the results of their works, are freed from the bondage of birth; and go to that realm where there is no evil.

When can that state be attained

52. When thy (purified) intellect shall cross beyond the mire of delusion,⁸ then shalt thou attain to dispassion for all that has been heard and is yet to be heard⁹

53. When thy intellect, perplexed¹⁰ by what thou hast heard, shall remain firm and steady in *samadhi* (the super-conscious Self),¹¹ then thou shalt attain to *Yoga* (union with wisdom).

The Characteristics of one who has Reached Superconscious Realization

54. Arjuna said: What is the description, O Keshava, of one who is steady in wisdom,¹² and established in *Samadhi* (superconsciousness)? How does he of steady wisdom speak; how sit, how move?

(Arjuna asks these questions to know the characteristic marks of one who has realized oneness with the Supreme Spirit—*Brahman*).

55. The Blessed Lord said: When a man, O Partha, completely abandons all the desires of the heart and is content in the Self alone by himself, then he is said to be steady in wisdom.

(This is the answer to the first question.)

⁸ Caused by appearances of sense-objects upon the mind

⁹ Thou shalt have no further desire for learning from books, discourses, etc.

¹⁰ Confused by the conflicting opinions of the scholars, and various interpretations of scriptural texts by clever theologians which thou hast heard.

¹¹ The attainment of *samadhi* and the realization of the absolute one.

¹² Realization of the absolute Truth.

56. He whose heart is not disturbed in pain, whose longing for pleasures is gone, who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage (Muni), steady in wisdom.

57. His wisdom is well established who is unattached everywhere, who neither rejoices on receiving good nor hates evil.

(He who is steady in wisdom does not feel exulted in pleasure nor does he hate pain that may befall him Under all conditions pleasant or unpleasant he rises above them through right discrimination).

58. And when he can completely withdraw the senses from sense objects as the tortoise (withdraws) its limbs from all sides, then his wisdom is well-established

(As a tortoise when frightened draws its limbs in its shell, so a wise man who is steady in Self-knowledge can withdraw the senses—i.e., powers of seeing, hearing, etc., from sense objects—colour, sound, etc.,—by entering into superconscious state and thus becomes detached from the sense objects as well as his body. There are cases of illness fatigue, where the senses are withdrawn like the limbs of a tortoise and patients are unable to enjoy sensuous objects, and others again suppress their senses through the practice of asceticism. How can such persons be compared with a wise man?)

59. Objects of senses fall away from the man (the embodied) who starves his senses, but not the relish thereof. But the relish, too, ceases on seeing (realizing) the Supreme

(When the ascetics and sick persons do not feed their senses with objects, the longing for the relish remains in their mind. But this longing and all desires for pleasure vanish with the realization of the highest truth. In other words, the wise man who is steady in wisdom, is the conqueror of the body, senses, and mind with all its desires.)

The subjugation of the senses is most important for:—

60. The turbulent senses O Son of Kunti, forcibly carrying¹³ the mind of even a wise man striving (for self mastery.)

61. Having subdued them all the steady minded one

¹³ Unsettle and drag towards sense-objects.

should sit¹⁴ intent on Me. Verily, his wisdom is well established, whose senses are subdued.¹⁵

62. By thinking of sense objects man's attachment to them is engendered. From attachment rises strong desire (karma) From desire springs forth anger.¹⁶

63. From anger results delusion,¹⁷ from delusion loss of memory, From loss of memory, the wreck of the understanding¹⁸ (Buddhi); when the understanding is wrecked the man is ruined.¹⁹

(When a man thinks of something which he likes, his mind becomes attached to it. The more he thinks of it the stronger grows his desire to possess it. This desire turns itself into anger if there be any obstacle in the way of possession. Anger throws the mental faculties into confusion, and the mind becomes deluded. Then one forgets the moral standard, loses discrimination, commits wrong or murder, lands in jail and is ruined.

Self-control leads to Peace and Happiness.

64. But the Self restrained man moving* among objects with senses under the control of his own Self, free from attachment and aversion, attains to tranquility

* Here is given the answer to the question of Arjuna, "How does he move?" in verse 54, Ch. II.²⁰

65. In tranquility comes the end of all his sufferings; for the understanding (*buddhi*) of him whose mind is tranquil quickly becomes well-settled (in wisdom).

Tranquility is extolled thus:

66. He, who is not self-controlled, has no understanding (*buddhi*), nor has meditation. There is no peace for the unmeditative. For, without peace where is happiness?

¹⁴ Here is given the answer to the question "How does he sit?" In verse 54 chapter II

¹⁵ i. e., Under his control.

¹⁶ Strong desire working under opposition takes the form of anger

¹⁷ Confusion of mental faculties.

¹⁸ Buddhi is the faculty of discrimination and judgement.

¹⁹ Moral death comes to one who loses discrimination and judgement.

²⁰ All sufferings physical and mental,—ailment, disease, sorrow, fear of death etc.

67. As the whirling wind turns the course of the boat on water, so when mind follows toward objects of senses, the senses destroy the faculty of discrimination of the uncontrolled men and make mind attached to the worldly objects.

68. Therefore O warrior, whose courses of senses have been stopped or controlled, he is known as a *sthita-prajna*, i.e. *Jnani*.

69. Those (objects or knowledge) which are not known to the wise i.e. the enlightened soul, remove the darkness of ignorance and realize the Brahman.

70. As the ocean which is full of water, is not swelled if water of the rivers enter into it, so anything cannot disturb a Self-realized man, because he is contented and satisfied all the time.

71. So a man who lives in this world after controlling his senses, desires and egoism, remains ever-contented, and enjoys eternal peace.

72. It is known as the *brahmasthiti*, and when a man attains to this sublime state, he is never deluded, and in the end i.e. after dissolution of his material body, he enters into *brahmanirvana* or Self-realization

Thus ends discourses on Sankhyayoga, the Second Chapter.